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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

LOCAL STATUS INDIAN IDENTITIES AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL CATEGORIZATION OF NATIVES AS A COLLECTIVITY OR GROUP: SOME OBSERVATIONS.

BY

PAUL LETKEMANN

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Arts.

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall, 1992.

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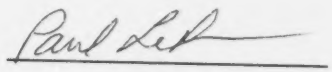

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The Undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Local Status Indian Identities and Anthropological Categorization of Natives as a Collectivity or Group: Some Observations", submitted by Paul Letkemann in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Arts.

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September 11, 1992.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines what have been described by anthropologists as localized Native identities, using an objective rather than psychological perspective. Canadian Indian reserves, especially in western Canada, are seen as closely knit communities, with members who are very familiar with community affairs and the daily lives of other community members. These communities are united by historical continuities with earlier Native lifestyles and social organization. Significant continuities are portrayed, from material written by Native authors and that of ethnographers. Changes are occurring in aspects of social structure, relationships among Indian community members, and between community members and significant non-Native agents.

Ethnic theory and terminology are suggested as useful but somewhat overlooked resources for study of Indian communities and identities. Potentially the most valuable aspect of ethnic theory as applied to Native peoples is the theory's flexibility. This flexibility has developed in the field of ethnic studies because studying ethnic groups has involved looking at diversity within and between groups, different relationships among members of these groups and between them and the larger societies in which they are situated. The unique aboriginal status of Canadian First Nations peoples, and the ways that the Canadian government has treated them, is in striking contrast to the situation of immigrant-origin ethnic groups and individuals. This means that ethnic theory would have to take these key differences into account when applied to First Nations situations, especially in regard to Native identities. Finally, anthropological and sociological categorization of all Canadian Native people

or persons as a collectivity or nation-wide group, is different from the ways that individual Indian community members think about themselves. This is discussed along with some of the goals of large scale Native political organizations.

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INTRODUCTION

The idea for this thesis came from my experience in a Native Studies class in which most of the students were Native people. I noticed that a common and often used expression in this class was the Native perspective; something that was talked about as if everyone understood what it meant and what it involved. However, when I made it clear that I did not understand what it was, and would appreciate some idea of what this Native perspective involved, it turned out that different Native students, with different backgrounds, had different ideas about what the Native perspective was. Although there were common elements and similarities, each Native student had his or her own perspective; yet at the same time they could and did recognize that other Native students also had a Native perspective, even though it might be different in some fundamental ways, even in contrast to their own. This observation led me to look at some aspects of Native identities, with the realization that there was a lot of individuality and local community aspects in these identities. There were also some important shared elements which could provide common ground.

In this thesis, I will restrict the discussion to Native identities at the level of reserve communities, which means that mainly I will be looking at the category of people called status Indians who are members of these kinds of communities. I will be looking at Native identities from a social anthropological perspective, emphasizing such things as the sense of community identity that develops in small reserve

situations. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) talk about identities in a way which is consistent with the way that I will be looking at aspects and indicators of identities in this paper.

> People's identities or social locations (that is, the patterns of social relationships in which they are enmeshed) can have two kinds of effects on the nature of accounts or actions they produce. First, social locations determine the kind of information available to people. They clearly affect what it is possible for people to see and hear 'at first hand'; they also determine what people will get to know about, and how they will get to know things 'second hand'. The second way in which identities affect actions and accounts is through the particular perspectives that people in various social locations tend to generate and that will filter their understanding and knowledge of the world. In particular, the interpretation of information available to a person is likely to be selected and slanted in line with his or her prevailing interests and concerns.
>
> (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:194)

In this thesis, I will be looking at what Nowicka (1981) calls "objectivist" as opposed to "psychological" meanings of identities, and the ethnographic and Native-written material that this thesis uses has been chosen partly because it deals with objective indicators of identity, social aspects that Nowicka observes are very different than psychological aspects.

> The sociological concept of social solidarity (or identity) is charged with ambiguity common to the whole humanistic terminology. This concept is used in sociological and anthropological literature mainly in two senses: (1) a psychological meaning, and (2) an objectivist meaning....
> The second notion of solidarity means intensive interactions, contacts, or interpersonal relations.
>
> (Nowicka 1981:75)

Anthropological writers mention that Canadian and American Native people in general have very localized identities (Dyck 1985), but they do not usually expand on what this expression means, or the reasons why this is the case. This thesis will attempt to do that, using themes found in books written by Native people about themselves and their experiences. The following chapters will use material written by Native individuals as a guideline for determining which aspects of identity are particularly important to Native identities and relationships. Ethnographic material which deals with the same issues and circumstances is used to expand upon aspects of Native identities as discussed in the material written by Natives. This presentation will expand upon the usually briefly mentioned aspects of the local Native identities on Canadian reserve communities, and will put into perspective the fact that while Native identities are generally local in reference and construction, Natives in anthropology and sociology are often discussed as a collectivity or group, and assigned a social identity at that level. This observation is related to the above mentioned discussion about identities with individual Native students in the classroom setting, and despite fundamental differences, their ability to accept other Native students' interpretations, along with their interpretation, as being the Native perspective.

The written work of authors and researchers from a wide variety of backgrounds has been used in this thesis. I will mention some here, as it is important to recognize that the academic backgrounds or life experiences of these people contribute to

different ways of looking at, in this case, Natives. Four books by Native authors are used to get an idea of central themes and issues for Native Canadians. These books are by Cardinal (1969, 1977), Manuel and Posluns (1974), and Deloria (1969). They are well known books by well established authors, and have become classics in this area of study. The themes in these books provide a continuity throughout this thesis. Much other material written by Native people has also been used; but I will not list them all here, the main criteria for their use being that they were talking firsthand about issues presented by the above authors. Some of these include Adams (1989); Little Bear et al (1984); Marule (1984); Thomas (1972); Pierre (1971); and Waubageshig (1970).

The anthropological material used here is mainly the result of ethnographic research done in small Indian communities or Canadian reserves, predominantly among status Indians. The authors are well established ethnographers who have concentrated on objective rather than psychological aspects of Indian lives and social worlds. Their observations tend to support those of the Native authors. These ethnographers come from a variety of theoretical backgrounds, but have looked at similar communities and similar issues. As well, the discussion of ethnic theory uses both anthropological and sociological material in this area of study (Buchignani and Letkemann 1992; Harmon 1990; Isajiw 1990; Roosens 1989; Brennan 1988; Muga 1988; Richmond 1987; Albers and James 1986; Breton 1984; Buchignani 1982; Kallen 1982; Rothschild 1981; Burnet 1976).

Also used here is a book by a journalist (York 1990) who did extensive fieldwork in several small Indian reserves. Some material by historians is used (e.g., Miller 1989; Wilson 1921) to provide an historical perspective when appropriate. Mainly in the third chapter, some sociological work is used (whether written by anthropologists or sociologists). This material tends to look at Natives in the general or collective sense (Cornell 1988; Tanner 1983; Larsen 1983; Kallen 1982; Price 1979).

I recognize that all of these different academic backgrounds and life experiences influence the written material of these authors. However, they all have their place in the study of Native peoples, and offer a variety of types of contributions; thus they have been incorporated in this thesis. It should also be mentioned here that I have used both the words Native and Indian in this thesis. I prefer the word Native when referring to these peoples; but as was pointed out to me, on Canadian reserves, the community members have for a long time been commonly categorized as status Indians. To avoid confusion I should say that the word Indian has been used here when referring to members of a reserve community, while the word Native appears when talking about First Nations peoples in a more general sense.

Canadian Indian status persons in the collective sense do not fit neatly into anthropological or sociological theoretical models used in the description and analysis of groups and group relations; partly because Natives occupy a distinct position within the dominant Canadian society, one which is different in many ways from what we call minority or ethnic groups. As Tanner observes, there are well known

differences between Native peoples and ethnic groups (1983:31). These differences have direct consequences for the ways these people think about themselves.

> The basis of the difference between Indians and the rest of Canadian society has for some time been a matter of controversy among anthropologists. I will list four aspects of this question. First, there are the cultural values of Canadian society, many of which are not shared by Indians.... Second, there are the different perceptions which each of the two groups has of its historic past and its future. That of the Canadian multiethnic society is by and large the experience of a long-term improvement, whereas that of Indians is one of decline from an earlier independence. Third, there are the different relationships of each group to the central institutions of society. Here I refer back to the discussion of the wardship system within which Indians live, one which although modified recently, is still in existence. ... Fourth, there is the relationship that each group has to the national system of production. Indians can be identified as having a mixed form of production, with a large component based on direct economic dependency on the government.
>
> (Tanner 1983:31-32)

Tanner is talking about Natives in the categorical or general sense, and outlining general differences between Natives and the rest of Canadians as two groups. This is one way of thinking about these differences, or things that are involved with being Native in Canadian society. As Tanner says, for some time anthropologists have been looking at these differences in terms of an implicit dichotomy between Natives and the rest of Canadian society in this general sense. However valid the pursuit of examining these differences using a model of Native peoples in a general sense, there are questions about how far one can go with that analysis. If the question is, how do Natives as a group differ from the rest of Canadian society?, the answer will be very limited; and may be relevant to, but will not say much about what it means or how

it feels to be an Indian status person living among other Native people and at the same time living in the larger Canadian society.

The approach taken in this thesis will be that the central question, as Tanner states it, is how do anthropologists see differences between Natives and other Canadians, concentrating on group characteristics and relationships; and how does this approach relate to Native views of difference and identity. Native people may rarely or never act or think of themselves as a group in the way that Tanner describes, and when they do the reasons for doing so may have more to do with how they are defined and treated by the rest of Canadian society than with how they think of themselves as individual Native persons. This chapter will incorporate some of Tanner's comments on difference, which are acknowledged here as relevant.

Of course, ethnographic works from which most of this material is gathered often focus on groups more than individuals. The questions raised by Tanner are central anthropological questions, and focus on Native identities at a group level. That is why they are anthropological questions rather than Native questions having to do with identities.

CHAPTER ONE

A THEORETICAL POSSIBILITY

Ethnic Theory: Usefulness and Limitations

In this chapter, ethnic theory, ethnic identity and ethnicity are presented as possible useful approaches to keep in mind when reading the following chapters. This chapter will focus on areas that ethnic theory addresses, rather than trying to say exactly what ethnic theory is. That definition would be a subject for an entire thesis, and many books have been written on it (Breton et al 1990; Kallen 1982; Roosens 1989; Rothschild 1981; Barth 1969; Brennan 1988; Buchignani 1982). The position taken here is that any theoretical approach that can be summed up in a few pages or presented as a model is bound to reflect contextually limited or reductionist approaches.

It is important to discuss the ways in which anthropologists and sociologists use theory in the area of Native studies, both in order to make sense of what they discover in ethnographic research, and to be able to apply and generalize from these understandings. Like categorization of Native peoples into a collectivity or nation-wide group for the purposes of discussion, anthropological and sociological theory and terminology may be far removed from how Native persons actually think about themselves and their world. Therefore, there are both elements of usefulness and limitations in the applicability of any theory.

> An exclusive dependence upon ungrounded, totalizing sociological concepts and categories for the purposes of depicting aboriginal cultures and issues would deny an essential, particularistic dimension of the cultures and ways of life that native peoples are seeking to protect and maintain.
> Attempts at generalization must be balanced by an appreciation that native communities - like all communities - are comprised of individuals, internal cleavages and other factors which frustrate tendencies toward monolithic theorizing.
> (Dyck 1990:44)

Although Dyck's comments are recognized in the social sciences, they are not always followed in research and writing, and sometimes there is a tendency towards "monolithic theorizing". Native authors have been aware of this tendency for a long time, and the following chapters will make this clear. In this thesis, the discrepancy between theoretical practice and the ways that Natives think about themselves is illustrated using a simple example of anthropological and sociological attempts to categorize Native peoples as a large collectivity or a nation-wide group. In regard to certain political matters, and a general nature of relationships with the dominant society, Native peoples may act and think in terms of this large scale organization (see Manuel and Posluns 1974). At the same time, this concept contrasts with the ways that Native people describe their social world in very local terms, a perspective which is reinforced by ethnographic observations.

Nevertheless, an appropriate theoretical presentation can be very helpful in being able to understand groups and identities, which are the primary subjects of this thesis. In these areas, one possible yet rarely used theoretical background is that of

ethnicity, which is concerned with an understanding of both the nature of groups and dimensions of identities. Muga (1987) shows the importance of theory in Native studies, in this case with a Marxist perspective.

> The lack of development of the Marxist perspective in regard to the nationalities question, especially in combination with the failure of ethnicity scholars to recognize the unique role of progressive forces including the labor movement in contributing to the resolution of some of the issues in the self-determination process, has left the discussion in the hands of a romantic Indian advocacy.
>
> (Muga 1987:31)

Muga thinks that a Marxist perspective should be incorporated with ethnic theory to provide a comprehensive framework which could be applied realistically, and which would contribute to a better understanding of Native communities as individual Nations.

> It is particularly important to recognize that indigenous communities of North America must not be conceptualized as simply ethnic minorities in a pluralist framework but rather as nations of ethnically conspicuous people seeking to fulfil and crystallize aspirations for self-determination.
>
> (Muga 1987:36)

Muga warns that without some theoretical background in the study of Native peoples and their situations, what is left may be only a "romantic Indian advocacy". This notion would be at least as divorced from a realistic perspective on Native issues and underlying economic and political forces as would an anthropological or sociological theory be removed from the ways that Native peoples think about themselves. There is a definite place for theory in the study of any group of people. However, the

theory of ethnicity which Muga recommends has not really been applied in Native studies for a number of reasons, most of which are political (Buchignani and Letkemann 1992).

In this chapter, some of the relatively rare cases which do utilize ethnic theory are used to show benefits and limitations. As the following chapters will show, the limitations are for the most part common to most anthropological or sociological theories. Native people do not think of themselves in relation to social science paradigms, so any type of theory is somewhat divorced from Native social identities. Such a theory's usefulness must be measured in relation to the amount of distortion it may create, and the realism it can maintain in the social sciences, rather than in the Native worlds. Social sciences have had a great impact on Native peoples, related to the ways that theories have been applied. Still, as Muga says, the alternative to the use of theories seems to be the involvement of romantic advocacy.

The reluctance to use ethnic theory and terminology in the field of Native studies comes from both people involved in the social sciences and from Native people themselves. Ethnic theory was developed in the area of study of the effects of colonialism on Native peoples in Africa. However, in North America it has been applied to immigrant communities almost exclusively, so that a widespread notion associating ethnicity with immigrant groups and communities exists among social scientists as well as among Native peoples. Actually, as the following chapters will show, Native peoples are tired of being misrepresented by the application of

inappropriate social science theory. However, as theoretical background and application are necessary parts of social science, the failure to recognize the benefits of ethnic theory in the study of Native peoples, even with its limitations, stands out as a problem in this area of study.

Ethnic theory was developed hand in hand with ethnographic research (see Barth 1969), and allows the study of communities and groups of people as distinct units, at the same time recognizing their connection to larger economic, political and social forces within which they operate. This approach is in contrast to what Muga calls romantic advocacy, or the lumping together of distinct and diverse Native peoples into a convenient category, usually as opposed to the rest of society so that opposition-related theory can be applied which only reflects a very narrow approach, again divorced from the ways that Native individuals think about their worlds. Maintaining a close relationship between ethnography and theory also helps in the avoidance of what Dyck (1990) calls monolithic theorizing. Such an approach is shown in the following chapters by comparing and contrasting local Native identities with anthropological and sociological categorization of Natives into a collectivity for the purposes of theoretical application which is rendered highly abstract. This categorization has important effects on how Natives are looked at by social scientists and the rest of society. However, it is not compatible with ethnographic accounts and those of Native authors, which recognize the distinctiveness of each Native community.

Politically, including the realm of multicultural policy, Canadian Native peoples are usually discussed as a nation-wide group, rather than as members of different and distinct nations within Canada. Therefore, there is a tendency within some of the literature which uses ethnic theory, to apply it in this general sense, trying to conceptualize Canadian or American Native peoples collectively as a single ethnic group. This conceptualization is the result of misapplication of theory, and involves what the following chapters show. Categorizing Native peoples as a collectivity or nation-wide group in order to apply theory easily is doomed to fail, since as Dyck (1990) says, it disregards the fundamental local differences between Native communities. Differences within and between such communities are important, and they are what Natives are trying to preserve when they present a united front for the political purposes of gaining self-government and preserving local differences. Ethnic theory is concerned with both the areas of local identities and outward presentation for political and other purposes.

> ... its instrumental utility in the struggle for power over and within states does not exhaust the potency of politicized ethnicity. Or, more precisely, ethnicity can be honed to that trenchant political cutting edge because it also fulfils other, non-political, prepolitical, or only incipiently political, human needs - emotional, cultural, moral needs.
> (Rothschild 1981:5)

Isajiw (1990) elaborates on ethnic theory dealing with inner subjective identities and outward aspects. Like Rothschild's "inner spiritual frontier" and the political outward presentation (1981:5), Isajiw speaks of the "external" and "internal" aspects of ethnic

identity.

> External aspects refer to observable behaviour, both cultural and social, such as (1) speaking an ethnic language, practising ethnic traditions, and so on; (2) participation in ethnic personal networks, such as family and friendship; (3) participation in ethnic institutional organizations, such as churches, schools, enterprises, media; (4) participations in ethnic voluntary associations, such as clubs, 'societies', youth organizations; and (5) participation in functions sponsored by ethnic organizations such as picnics, concerts, public lectures, rallies, dances.
>
> The internal, subjective aspects of ethnic identity refer to images, ideas, attitudes and feelings. These, of course, are interconnected with the external, or objective, behaviour. But it should not be assumed that, empirically, the two types are always dependent upon each other.
>
> (Isajiw 1990:36)

Ethnic theory does not neglect the individual, or subjective aspects of identity. It does not assume or even suggest homogeneity among members of the same community, regional or linguistic group. If ethnic theory is applied well, it would be impossible to categorize in a way that puts diverse communities in a single category. As the following chapters show, this kind of categorizing is still done in Native studies for the purposes of applying broad theories, and becomes divorced from locally defined and recognized Native identities.

Ethnic theory has developed specifically to allow distinct and different communities, composed of individuals having distinct sub-group affiliations and individual personalities, to be looked at in relation to the larger often dominant society within which they must operate. This thesis will show how this social structuring and relationships are how Canadian Native peoples describe themselves,

and ethnographic research appears to confirm to be the case. In the next chapter, sub-group affiliations within Indian communities will be shown to have significance to how Native peoples view themselves and their communities, and how these sub-group affiliations and organization contribute to Native world views. Ethnic theory has had to recognize and make sense of these inter-community divisions, and this is one area to which ethnic theory could be applied.

> All studies show that informal community social space is multiply-divided by gender, kinship, generation, class and perhaps religion, linguistic and cultural difference. Moreover, they show systematic relationships between these sub-community breaks in social network space and such things as personal and ethnic group identities, the culture-specific notions of kinship obligations and appropriate inter-personal behaviour, and functional need.
>
> (Buchignani and Letkemann 1992)

Before discussing definitions and ethnic theory that could be useful, it is necessary to make it quite clear that I recognize fundamental differences between Native communities, and immigrant-origin peoples which have become so strongly associated in North America with ethnic theory and as ethnic groups. Because of these fundamental differences, ethnic theory cannot be applied to Native peoples in the same ways as it is to these immigrant-origin groups. However, ethnic theory does not rely upon any certain kind of group or community. This is not the case for the opposition theory commonly used when Native peoples are categorized together as a group predominantly in relation to another group, the dominant society, as the following chapters will show. Briefly then, here are some fundamental differences

between Native and immigrant-origin communities:

1. Native peoples are of indigenous origin; they have not left their homeland, and often continue to reside in important places of historical significance to them.

2. Status Indian peoples have specific treaty arrangements which are thought to guarantee them certain rights: these treaties, like the local environments, are very important aspects of Native identities.

3. Native communities do not recruit new members from a distant homeland: treaty Indians have much more of a closed system than immigrant communities.

4. Reserve communities are usually isolated from large urban centres, both geographically and through social isolation.

5. Reserve communities are usually deprived of access to resources which could be used by them to develop economically and institutionally. Immigrant communities do not have the same kinds of restrictions.

6. Related to the above, Native community members live under the umbrella of the effects of paternalistic government policy which assumes that they cannot run their own affairs. Immigrant communities are not governed this way, and through multicultural policy they are encouraged and given resources to develop themselves and their communities in ways similar to those of the dominant society.

These are a few key differences between immigrant origin and Native communities which are important in the ways these people think about themselves. If ethnic theory is associated only with immigrant-origin peoples, these differences would superficially

suggest that it would be very inappropriate to apply ethnic theory to the study of Native peoples and communities. However, this association of ethnic theory strictly with immigrant-origin groups, and thus denial of its usefulness in understanding Native peoples and communities, is analogous to, in the words of Muga (1987) and Albers and James (1986) "throwing the baby out with the bathwater". Ethnic theory is strongly concerned with recognition of difference, whether it is difference within or between communities, including difference between small communities and the larger dominant society. This concern means that ethnic theory has to be flexible enough to accommodate a wide variety of social circumstances. For example, fundamental differences between Native communities and their situations and immigrant-origin ethnic communities would be understood before any attempt to apply ethnic theory to the study of Native peoples was begun. There are differences within and between immigrant-origin communities too. Although these groups have certain things in common, they are very different; and members of these communities are very aware of these differences. No one in the field of anthropology or ethnic studies would suggest that Sikhs and Hindus in Vancouver are the same, or that their differences are minor. Native communities show similar differences as is shown in the following chapters. They have certain things in common, most of which have to do with their relationship to the dominant society; yet they are very different from community to community, and these sometimes subtle differences are what gives them a local sense of identity. Ethnic theory has had to be very flexible in order to

accommodate this kind of difference, and it is perhaps this flexibility that could make it useful in Native studies.

Tanner (1983:6) dismisses ethnic theory as not applicable to Native studies because it does not address a situation where the minority group is systematically denied access to the resources necessary for community development and competition within the larger society. This is certainly a valid point, and relates to what I have mentioned about the fundamentally different situation that Native peoples find themselves in compared to immigrant-origin ethnic groups. As Fisher (1976) says, and Kallen (1982) elaborates on, Native peoples have consistently been categorized as a collectivity or nation-wide group; and as such been treated as if they were a lower social class. This categorization and treatment has affected Native identities, as both the Native authors and ethnographers show in the following chapters. Kallen notes that Natives have always occupied a distinct position in Canadian society, as "third class citizens" as compared to immigrant peoples whom she calls "second class citizens".

> It is these considerations (domination, dependence, bureaucracy-client relations) that lead Dunning, Inglis, and Carstens to suggest that the behaviours of the Indian status persons resident in these communities is not necessarily an 'ethnic' kind of behaviour, but rather a behaviour typical of a social class as an element in the social class hierarchy of Canadian society.
>
> (Fisher 1976:459)

> The third class citizens are Canada's aboriginal peoples (i.e. Indians and Inuit), whose aboriginal and treaty rights - ignored under the multicultural policy - derive from their historic occupation and use of the land long before the so-called charter groups.
>
> (Kallen 1982:169)

It is these ideas, as put forth by Fisher and Kallen, to which Tanner is pointing with his comment that ethnic theory is not designed to deal with the particular relationship that Native peoples have with the dominant society. There is an element of social class which is very different from that of immigrant-origin ethnic groups.

> However, Cohen's approach does not consider such matters as the possibility of the state government itself standing above such [class] divisions, adopting a policy of depriving the tribal group of power, and frustrating attempts to make use of ethnic competition. His theory suggests that the use of ethnicity depends solely on competitive strategies in a multi-ethnic environment. It is this assumption that is open to question.
>
> (Tanner 1983:6)

The fact that ethnic theory is very flexible and dependent upon context should be made clear here. Ethnic identity can take many forms, and ethnic theory is able to incorporate different kinds of relationships between minority and dominant societies. For example, recently anthropologists and sociologists are finding that ethnic theory is compatible with a Marxist perspective, indicating that discussion of class-related issues and situations is not beyond the scope of ethnic theory (Albers and James 1986; Muga 1987). There are different theories of ethnicity; necessarily because ethnic theory has developed in different contexts and different communities and societies with different historical circumstances. That ethnic theory is not something

that can be shown as a neat, all-encompassing model is not a disadvantage, but shows a flexibility that includes difference as a central principle. As this thesis will show, difference is something that is neglected or denied by other social anthropological or sociological approaches and ways of looking at Native peoples that are employed by researchers in the Native studies area. Researchers in Native studies sometimes equate ethnic theory with immigrant groups, and deny its validity to Indians on that basis alone. However, context is central to the application of ethnic theory, and to the definitions of ethnic identity.

> The relative influence of ethnic ascriptions and their correspondence with other sociocultural phenomena must be established in concrete and particular historical contexts.
> (Albers and James 1986:1)

> It has been suggested that if an ethnic label is to be seen to be used appropriately as a descriptor for an individual or group, it must be recognized that the label has meaning only within a specified context.
> (Wall 1985:37)

There is a Canadian presence in this recently developing area, which seems to be occurring mostly in the field of sociology (see Muga 1987; Richmond 1987; Burnet 1976). Two books stand out as possible exceptions (Paine 1977, 1971). These books discuss Native situations in terms of ethnic theory and constructs, but the word ethnic does not appear very often. Two American anthropologists are at the forefront of attempts to integrate ethnic theory with the Native context and situation related to the dominant society (see Albers and James 1986). As Albers and James point out, ethnicity, ethnic identity and ethnic theory are not unique in their apparent

difficulties when applied to Native studies. They point out the conceptual confusion in applying such a commonly used conceptual tool as the word "tribe".

> Yet, over the past century, ethnographers have ascribed tribal status and labels to very different kinds of groups. Even though the labels usually correspond with some form of indigenous terminology, they do not signify equivalent levels of inclusiveness in the ethnic naming process.
> ...This kind of inconsistency has been symptomatic of a more general analytical problem: what criteria should one use in defining a tribe? In the literature on Plains Indians, a wide variety of diacritica have been employed in the definition(s) of a tribe. Some sources stress only one type of attribute, as in Wissler's definition of a tribe as an independent governing body, or in Ruth Benedict's use of ideology as a defining criterion. In other sources several diacritica are employed concurrently, as in Robert Lowie's identification of tribes along political as well as linguistic lines. Since tribes have not been identified in terms of a consistent set of properties, it is not surprising that the types of groups accorded tribal status have not been uniform.
> (Albers and James 1986:3)

Perhaps it will be Native people themselves who will be able to sort out definitional confusion, and provide theoretical direction that is needed in the social sciences. Ethnic theory and terminology is briefly outlined here as a possibility because it begins with contextual flexibility and acknowledges difference as central, and looks at relationships rather than closed units.

CHAPTER TWO

LOCAL STATUS INDIAN IDENTITIES: SOME INDIGENOUS ASPECTS

Indian Identities as Individual, Small Group and Locally Oriented

We will begin with the idea that when Native people are at home interacting with other Native people, they do not often think of themselves in terms of being "Indian", or in the ways that anthropological ideas about being Native have stressed. In fact, one of the reasons that Native people value the reserves so much (York 1990) may be that on the reserves they can think of themselves as individuals first, and not be constantly reminded by members of the dominant society that they are defined in a rather narrow, often stereotyped image as Natives.

This chapter, then, will outline some of the aspects of being an individual person who lives within an environment as a treaty or status Indian, and the reserve setting will be used as it has been looked at by ethnographers. This review will present an idea of what it means to be a Native person in one sense, and provide some limited insight into aspects of individual Native identities at the local level. Later this chapter will introduce the central theme of the second chapter, the great influence of the dominant society over Native identities. First of all, however, it is important to realize that the most important components of Native identities are created by Native people themselves, and these are found at the local and individual level.

Living on the Canadian reserve:

There is great diversity among Canadian reserve communities, including cultural differences as well as socio-economic and political distinctions. This chapter will not attempt to examine these differences in any comprehensive manner; rather, it will concentrate on common themes and aspects of reserve communities, as described by Native authors and non-Native ethnographers. The ability to generalize in this way does not imply an assumption of a uniformity among all reserve communities. Rather, it reflects common realities that have contributed to the shaping of Native identities. As Manuel and Posluns (1974:2) say, there is validity in this type of approach as long as it is related to common experiences and some connection to identities - they say that in terms of experience at least, one can look at any single Native nation as a "microcosm" of the whole Aboriginal world.

As Adams (1989) mentions, reserves all over Canada were initially established for similar reasons. They were the result of negotiations at times when Native peoples were distinctly at a disadvantage.

> Ottawa officials were bargaining from a position of state power, backed by the mounted police and the combined military force of Canada and England. They were familiar with the English language and legal contracts based on English law. The Indians, on the other hand, were powerless: they did not speak English, they were seriously divided, and they were economically dependent; they were on bended knee in supplication to the white negotiators. All this was called treaty negotiation. To most Indians who were forced to attend these spectacles it was an agonizing experience of final surrender to the colonizer.
>
> (Adams 1989:63)

Canadian reserves were the result of similar historic processes, involving the colonial need for land for European farming, mining, lumbering, etc., and the general impression of the Native residents as impediments to these kinds of activities. Although the formation of reserves was a European imposition on Native cultures at a time when the latter were unable to resist, the restricting of Native people on plots of land resulted in the creation of new forms of community. Economic deprivation and political and cultural disorganization accompanied the reserve community formation, and in many ways continue to affect reserve societies. However, there also exists a social solidarity among reserve communities, even with geographical, cultural and ecological differences taken into account.

> Half of Canada's reserve Indians are members of 484 bands with populations of less than 1,000 residents. Eighty-six bands, ranging in size between 1,000 and 3,000 residents, account for 40 percent of the total population. Indian Affairs classifies a third of the bands as urban, those located within 50 kilometres of a major centre. The department has inappropriately labelled 100 bands as special access, which is a puzzling term because they remain inaccessible except by air. Another 270 bands are classified as rural, which means that they are located between 50 and 350 kilometres from a major centre and have year-round road access. The remaining twenty-five are classified as remote; these are located more than 350 kilometres from the nearest centre but are only accessible during the winter months when paths are cleared over frozen lakes and bogs (this number slowly dwindles as road construction occurs).
>
> (Comeau and Santin 1990:27-28)

Partly because most reserves in Canada are relatively small in size and population and usually geographically isolated, they may have rather intimate social groups, members of which are very close to one another. There are close relationships and

extensive knowledge of community affairs among individual community members. Of course the degree to which this is true, and the ways in which this social interaction and familiarity are expressed, can be quite different in different reserve communities. In ways that are important for identities, the small size of reserves is an important factor in the kinds of communities involved. As Comeau and Santin (1990) point out, relative size and relative isolation may both play a part in the structuring of relationships on reserves, and the maintenance of social intimacy.

The small size of reserve communities is a factor in the way that people relate to each other, and the intimate awareness about what other people are doing and how they feel about things. Paradoxically this intimacy was further enhanced by the tragedy of the diseases which drastically lowered reserve population numbers in the late 1800s and early 1900s (but which began reaping their toll 350 years ago). Everywhere in Canada, reserve populations were seriously depleted, a reduction which meant that a small group of survivors in each community were left to carry on the life of the band. Each of these survivors had experienced grievous personal loss in their families. This consideration leads us to another aspect of the intimate relations in reserve communities, which reflects the tribal cohesiveness that pre-existed the formation of reserves. Manuel and Posluns observe:

> In a society where all are related, where everybody is someone else's mother, father, brother, sister, aunt or cousin, and where you cannot leave without eventually coming home, simple decisions require the approval of nearly everyone in that society. It is the society as a whole, not merely a part of it, that must survive.
>
> (Manuel and Posluns 1974:7)

A distinctive and very intimate kind of social relationship is illustrated by the above, and this pattern of close relationships and small reference groups built around extended families and kin has been noted by ethnographers in many Native communities. This pattern of close kin and family relationships has been maintained in the concentration of small groups of people on reserves, but it is a pattern that has important historical ties and continuities from times when Native people lived as hunters and gatherers. The anthropological literature says that hunting and gathering bands usually consisted of small groups of related individuals who displayed traditional cultural patterns of intensive social life. As Brody notes for Inuit societies, smallness of size was similarly a factor in the kinds of relationships and level of intimacy.

> The smallness of the *Inummariit* community conditioned the relationships that existed among the families in it. They looked to one another for help. Indeed, they had a strong right, almost a legal right, to each other's help. In a camp, the Eskimos were their own masters, neither directly supported nor manipulated by outsiders. This sense of coherence and integrity was felt most strongly in family life.
>
> (Brody 1975:137)

Brody is talking about small hunting bands living off the land with an indigenous economic and political structure, and not about the reserve situation and the outside

interference which took the control and sense of coherence and integrity out of the hands of Indian people. However, both Native authors and non-Native ethnographers have observed that in some important ways, the small-scale, relatively isolated reserve situation allowed some of this traditional social intimacy to continue. This cohesion does not mean that reserve communities are in any sense homogenous. They are composed of individuals with a strong sense of individuality, and different kinds of individual identities. However, there is also a framework, however loose, which connects these individuals to other individuals in other families with an awareness of social intimacy, as mentioned above.

Factionalism and Intimacy:

These small communities are often split into factions politically, economically or socially. This factionalism is evidence of diversity rather than homogeneity in relation to identities. Native leaders comment upon the frequent inability to reach consensus on an issue among community members (Cardinal 1969:102). Similarly, ethnographers observing elements of social organization in reserve communities notice factionalism. However, the kind of factionalism common to reserve communities is of a socially intimate nature. Division into smaller groups both facilitates very close personal relations within the groups themselves, and provides a coherent framework for interaction among individuals or between groups within the community. This factionalism may have come from social processes which are part of the political and economic organization of small kin-based groups. Like the sense

of social closeness outlined above, factionalism may have some ties to the pre-reserve traditional hunting and gathering social organization.

For a long time, ethnographers have acknowledged that traditional hunter-gathering societies were based on a social organization involving small groups which were self-sufficient for much of the year. Although members of these small groups were aware of a larger or tribal affiliation, the members of a tribe or nation usually did not come together as a group except at certain times of the year, when they could gather around a particularly large resource like a salmon spawning run or buffalo drive. The small sub-group within the larger community was the most important unit in terms of social organization and the everyday management of resources.

> Just prior to the coming of the white man, the economy of the region of the Dene was characterized by the dominance of small self-sufficient groups of approximately twenty to thirty related persons called by anthropologists 'local groups'.
>
> (Asch 1977:47)

Part of the ability to maintain a coherent sense of belonging to the larger tribal or national group while organized into these smaller sub-groups, was the fact that membership in these sub-groups was constantly shifting and changing, which provided a social connection which tied groups together. Groups were connected by marriage, kinship and friendship alliances which involved sharing resources. Out-marriage from the small groups meant that they were not entirely isolated nor entirely detached from the larger nationl group. Also, the periodic gathering of groups into larger units, accompanied by intensive socializing and ceremonial activities, reinforced a

sense of belonging to the larger group.

> They would go to one of the major lakes where an encampment of perhaps two hundred persons would be formed, probably around the times of the fish runs. Then, before winter, the people would return again to their small local groups....
> Thus, it would seem that the principle of mutual sharing of resources was extended beyond the local group to include all groups in the region. This was done through a kinship and marriage system which linked all the people in the region into a single social unit and thus conveyed to all reciprocal rights and obligations concerning the use of resources in the region.
>
> (Asch 1977:48)

This kind of social organization noted by Asch (here specifically in reference to economics) may represent social organization among many pre-contact and pre-reserve Native communities. It may be hypothesized that these small social sub-groups had political as well as economic functions. When the larger communities were gathered around a large resource, the smaller sub-groups retained their economic and political salience, which would be expressed, in part, by ongoing sharing with other related groups. In other words, even in pre-contact times and before concentration on reserves, a characteristic of Native traditional social organization of reserve-sized numbers would have been this subdivision into smaller subgroups with social, political and economic functions. When pre-contact and pre-reserve social organization is looked at by anthropologists (usually in relation to economic or political functions), it is most often described as a sensible and necessary way to deal with fluctuating resources, a corresponding social flexibility, and a framework for social coherence. This is not factionalism in a negative or

socially dysfunctional sense. Rather, it is traditional and essential, and a Native kind of social organization.

Although the modern reserve situation differs from past situations, especially politically and economically, ethnographers still find this subdivision of the reserve community into smaller groups with political and economic functions. Lithman (1984) describes these groups as "bunches", with the same kind of fluidity of individual membership and connections that indicate their socially integrative function rather than mere factionalism.

> The pressures that come to bear on the distribution of the common resources in Maple River are always, directly or indirectly, organized through what in the resident's usage are called bunches. In some situations, the presumed reaction from various bunches to certain ways of distributing the common good is what influences decision-making. Sometimes a bunch, or, rather, a bunch leader, operates openly to influence decisions in certain ways, and in some instances a number of bunches will form a united front.
>
> (Lithman 1984:143)

As Lithman notes, this subdivision is a framework within which social, political and economic processes go on and decisions are made. In the end, this factionalism actually contributes to a coherent sense of community for members of different small groups or "bunches".

> A prominent feature of politics in Maple River is its very subtlety. The relative lack of formally structured arenas for political actions cannot be suggested as a reason for this. Instead, one can see how that political system in operation on the reserve succeeds in its task of distributing the common good in the community precisely because of the lack of formalized political structures. The constant reshuffling of relationships between bunches, the guesswork about what relationships

> are being forged by other bunches, the multiplicity of interpretations that often can be given to messages flowing between parties discussing politics, as well as the occasional uncertainty as to whether politics is being discussed, are all necessary ingredients in this political system, the most prominent feature of which is the equal distribution of resources and thus also the prevention of accumulation of financial as well as political capital.
>
> (Lithman 1984:149)

Today reserves are often seriously divided by class distinctions which are similar to divisions in the dominant society. However, the socially integrative subdivision into small groups, as a reminder of traditional hunter-gatherer social organization, is a factor which also must be taken into account in understanding local identities in reserve communities.

This particular social organization in reserve communities contributes to a strong sense of belonging among individuals, who usually belong to both a specific kin and friendship-based small group and to the larger community as a whole. The constant interaction of people who identify with and are identified by their smaller kin and friendship-based group provides a very intimate and personal sense of individual and community identities that are emotionally charged. In other words, Native people may be seen as being attached to and identifying strongly with their extended family and groups of friends, and their local communities; and the above outlined kind of social organization is one of the reasons this is the case. Because of possible connections to traditional social organization, this kind of identification should be seen as a distinctly Native aspect of identity.

The Individual, Community and World View:

The kind of social intimacy described above is also an aspect of Native identity because it implies certain obligations and codes of behaviour that are different from those found in non-Native communities. Even when local cultural traits have changed enough to make it difficult to find a distinctive cultural group in the ethnographer's opinion (Rohner and Rohner 1970:38), there is still something uniquely Native about the orientation of individuals to the community because of distinctive patterns of social organization, their accompanying codes of behaviour and the resulting close association of individuals to the community.

> What then makes the Kwakiutl unique today as a culture-bearing population? To be a regularly participating member within the social system at Gilford, in a very broad sense, implies a status with its associated role(s) - as demonstrated by the fact that the villagers maintain a definite set of norms that guide their behavior and by which they evaluate the behavior of each other and outsiders. It is these norms and valued behavior standards that give life within the village at Gilford a large part of its distinctive flavor. Individual decision-making processes are guided by these norms as are interpersonal relations, and aspects of the Indians' world view.
> .... A sense of security, a reference group for personal identity, and social approval are provided for those who adhere reasonably well to the normative standards. On the other hand, the villagers impose compelling and often negative sanctions on the person who violates norms too extremely or too often.
>
> (Rohner and Rohner 1970:38-39)

Together, this kind of social organization, social intimacy and attending (often kinship-related) obligations and codes of behaviour indicate a distinct world view. It is significant that the Rohners relate social norms and this social organization and

its relationships to an Indian world view. The position taken in this chapter is that a distinctly Native world view does exist, even in communities like the one studied by the Rohners, where cultural change has meant that if material culture was the only criterion "... the Indians can be viewed as a rural, working-class, subcultural variant of the North American class structure, rather than being a distinctive cultural group" (Rohner and Rohner 1970:38).

That Indian communities still incorporate a world view that is distinctly Native and different from non-Native societies (including ethnic groups) is something that is either assumed to be true by Native authors, or described in bits and pieces throughout their writings. Like the Rohners, these Native authors relate reserve social organization and the particularly close personal relations and relationship between the individual and the community to a particular way of looking at the world, and to the individual in relation to the larger system. This view obviously indicates a Native identity which links the individual to the small intimate group of relatives and friends, and to the larger community, in this case the reserve society. Deloria (1969) talks about the closeness of this relationship, and implies that it is a relationship not understood by non-Native researchers, since it is so unfamiliar and distinctly a Native kind of identity (Deloria, like most American authors, uses the word tribe when referring to the reserve community).

> White society concentrated on the individual Indian to the exclusion of his group, forgetting that any society is merely a composite of individuals. Generalizations by experts universalized "Indianness" to the detriment of unique Indian values. Indians with a common cultural base shared behavior patterns. But they were expected to behave like similar groups of whites and rarely did. Whites, on the other hand, generally came from a multitude of backgrounds and shared only the need for economic subsistence. There was no way, therefore, to combine white values and Indian behavior into a workable program or intelligible subject for discussion.
>
> (Deloria 1969:10)

> Tribalism looks at life as an undifferentiated whole. Distinctions are not made between social and psychological, educational and historical, political and legal. The tribe is an all-purpose entity which is expected to serve all areas of life.
>
> (Deloria 1969:264)

Reserve community members share a great deal of their lives with each other, and as mentioned above this is the foundation of a social organization and its codes and norms of behaviour within a network of small groups that are the community. But this sharing, partly because of the closeness of the community members, includes sharing aspects of a distinct (individual) world view which sets the community apart from the outside non-Native society. Through this world view the importance of the community to the individual is increased. What Deloria (1969), Cardinal (1969) and Manuel and Posluns (1974), emphasize is that this closeness of the individual and the immediate community is so profound that any conceptual separation of the two is artificial. The Indian world view does not separate the individual from the community. We can see the importance of community relations for individual Native identity, as expressed by Indian reserve members themselves.

> "I feel at home," one band member said. "That's not the way I feel in the south because when I'm there I'm just an Indian and people react in a different way."
> If the reserves were dismantled and Indians were scattered into the cities, the values and social relationships of the Indian community would be lost "There's a lot of beautiful things at home," says Lyle Longclaws, former president of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, who grew up on the Waywayseecappo reserve. "You're closer to each other. Our only resource is ourselves, so we build on that. We have a solid family life and a solid community life. Its the whole clan system. In the city, you're lucky to get the first name of your neighbour. You miss your own people."
> An Indian on a reserve is really a member of an extended family. On many reserves, almost everyone is related to everyone else by blood or marriage, and there is a tradition of interdependence and mutual help. Band members have the security of belonging to a tightly knit community, sharing a common history and a sense of kinship. On a summer day, the doors of the houses are open. People drop in to visit each other for a few hours - or for a few weeks, if they are returning from the city and need a place to stay.
> (York 1990:85)

This section of the chapter has described some aspects of a local Native community-related basis for Native identities. This is only one part or aspect of Native identities, as this thesis is intended to illustrate. Yet localized individual-community relationships and structures should be looked at as underlying a very personal basis for status Indian identities. One indication of this emotional closeness is the rather remarkable fact that a Native world view or identity at this local level may be said to exist, considering the incredible amount of outside influence and interference by the dominant society. There has been considerable cultural change in Native communities too. An example of one important and often mentioned aspect of this Native world view and Native identity is in the following section, which will

discuss the concept of sharing in status Indian communities. Ideas of appropriate behaviour with regards to sharing may be seen as one recognizable aspect of social relationships and ideas of kinship, friendship and community that distinguishes Native communities from those of non-Native society.

Sharing:

The ideology of appropriate sharing behaviour is one aspect of Native world view and traditional practice that is seen as important by both anthropological researchers and Native authors. As Asch and other ethnographers recognize, sharing practices were deeply entrenched in hunter-gatherer social organization. They took the form of personal reciprocal and kinship-based obligations along with well understood patterns of distribution of resources. As Asch mentions (1977:47-49), these patterned obligations which were related to sharing allowed the society as a whole to benefit from fluctuating resources directly controlled by potentially autonomous smaller groups. Although these patterns of sharing which were once widely observed are by no means culturally intact, sharing as an ideology or ethic retains a great deal of importance and relevance within Indian reserves. As has already been mentioned, reserves are seen by residents as places where in summer house doors are left open, and people are often dropping by for short visits or extended stays. This custom implies a general understanding of the residence as something to be shared. This concept is different from formal visiting, and the idea of the home as an extremely private refuge for the family, that can be found in modern non-Native society. This

Native ideology of appropriate sharing behaviour is an indication of a particular world view which has its roots in traditional economic and political life as well as small, isolated modern Indian settlements. The importance of this sharing ideology is stressed by Manuel, when he recalls the terrible shock to the whole community in which he grew up, the first time that a hunter ignored the traditional pattern of distributing his kill. To Manuel, this was the first evidence of cultural changes that would affect both community and individual relations, and therefore have a direct effect on identities.

> That fall, I remember, was the first time when a man of our village refused to share a deer he had killed. ... The man was disgraced and totally ostracized. Ostracism was the only punishment we knew in those days. ... What that man had done was worse than thieving; it was as if he had beaten an old woman or molested an infant girl. Even that comparison is uncertain, for those offenses were as unknown to our village as a refusal to share. But the power of the elders and the chief were declining. He could not be banished. I doubt that anyone talked to that man before that winter's snow was gone. That same man was the first to own a car on our reserve. He had been disgraced and ridiculed throughout the Shuswap. But he was a pioneer in introducing European progress.
>
> (Manuel and Posluns 1974:51)

Adams (1989) echoes Manuel's observation of the traditional importance of the ideology of sharing, and the unthinkable idea of deviating from established patterns. The ideology of sharing may be seen as one of the central elements of traditional Native social organization, world view, and identity as individuals and as a people.

> There were no poor and needy by comparison with other members, and likewise no wealthy and privileged; as a result, on the prairies there were no classes and class antagonisms among the people. Members of the community were bound to give each other assistance, protection, and support, not only as part of their economics, but as a part of their religion as well. Sharing was a natural characteristic of their way of life. Each member recognized his or her responsibility for contributing to the tribe's welfare when required, and individual profit-making was unknown. Everyone was equal in rights and benefits. Some native communities still function communally in this manner, particularly in poor areas. Very few members set themselves apart from the community and attempted to accumulate material wealth for themselves.
>
> (Adams 1989:22)

The above statements stress that the ideology of sharing was a central idea to Native societies, and most importantly, that it was part of the whole social system, not just a feature of the economic organization. As Deloria has noted, Native society is seen as an undifferentiated whole, with all social life tied together, so that anthropological and sociological analytic distinctions such as political, economic, psychological, etc., do not fit in Indian societies as well as they do in European or western societies. Sharing as an ideology should be looked at as a part of all aspects of Native society. It is very important to Native ideas about what it means to be part of a larger whole. As Adams (1989:20-23) says, this sharing ideology has not persisted unchanged, but it is significant that modern-day ethnographers still note the importance of a pattern of sharing in different Indian communities. Adams thinks that these patterns have survived mostly in poor areas, which means that many Indian reserve communities may exhibit this sharing ideology. Most of Canada's reserve

communities are severely affected by poverty (see York 1990).

The Rohners' (1970) observations among the Kwakiutl support Manuel and Posluns (1974) and Adams (1989) views regarding the central importance of the sharing ideology in Indian social cohesion and identity. Sharing patterns are the heart of codes of behavior or normative standards. Even in a community which has changed, such as the one the Rohners studied, these codes and standards set the society apart from the mainstream as Native in character. The Rohners (1970:39-40), divide the individuals of the community into categories of the subsistence-oriented and the future-oriented, and note that the ideology of sharing as a traditional aspect of an individual's relations to the larger community is mostly found among the subsistence-oriented. This finding parallels Adams' (1989:20-23) belief that it is among the poorer Native people that the sharing ideology remains the most intact. The Rohners describe the subsistence-oriented as the people who live mostly for the present on a day-to-day basis, or prepare for the immediate future such as the upcoming winter. This approach to life is opposed to that of the future- oriented people who accumulate wealth and plan for the long term future (Rohner and Rohner 1970:39). As the following shows, the choice to take the latter approach in a Native community can still mean breaking off social relationships, or an ostracization and household isolation. This situation can affect personal identities.

> No individual who remains in the subsisting oriented web of interaction within the community can sink too low or rise too high, either economically or socially, because of the patterns of borrowing and sharing. Borrowing and sharing have sharp levelling effects and occur from an interaction between personal choice and social obligation. Items are borrowed (often permanently), given, exchanged and freely taken among members of the community. An individual or family in need may borrow from another who has a surplus. Requests are sometimes refused, but consistent refusal sets an individual apart from the remainder of the community and disrupts normal social relationships. It also directs criticism against the person who refused.... Subsisting oriented villagers control the behavior of others by rewarding, among other things, conformity to their norm of not-rising-too-high (not becoming over-acculturated to White middle-class standards). Reward comes in the form of continued, close social interaction with other members of the village. Individuals who rise too high suffer deprivation of positive reinforcements in varying degrees.
>
> (Rohner and Rohner 1970:39-40)

It is obvious that under the conditions that prevail on most Indian reserves today, the majority of Indian people are living in a subsistence oriented way of life, and if the Rohners' and Adams' observations are correct, these conditions likely contribute to their retention of a sharing ideology. However, the connection to tradition and religion is also a factor in the persistence of this kind of ideology. Again, it is important to recognize that analytically, something like the sharing ideology cannot be separated from all other aspects of Native social life and Indian understandings of themselves as individuals in relation to their place within the community. Braroe (1975:43-56) also observed the central importance of the sharing and borrowing ideology among members of a Plains Indian community; and similarly he connected it to traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyles, and remarks on its persistence when other

cultural aspects of the lifestyle are no longer there. Given the persistence of this ideology, it is should be seen as a central objectively ascertainable aspect of Native world view, identities and conceptions of proper patterns of social interaction and treatment of others. Braroe notes a connection between the ceremonial and religious side of the community lifestyle and beliefs system, a connection which supports the view of sharing as part of a particular world view.

> In Short Grass, Indians place great positive regard on sharing one's resources with others, and on doing so generously. Conversely, they are strongly critical of people they consider stingy or greedy....Resources are fairly evenly distributed among the band, so that no single person is able to assume a position of importance by unusual generosity, as was possible in the old days. But sharing and generosity are still valued as personal qualities, and a person who has money, food, or any other resource is expected to unhesitatingly and ungrudgingly distribute it to others.
>
> (Braroe 1975:143,145)

Religious and Ceremonial Aspects

Today we cannot suggest that Native religion and ceremonial practice have remained intact after hundreds of years of colonial and missionary activities. However, like the ideology of sharing, some aspects of the indigenous Native religions persist as an important part of life in most reserve communities. This fact does not mean that all members of any reserve community adhere to tradition-based religious ideology, or take part in tradition-based ceremonies. What it does mean is that practices and the religious ideologies on which they are based have survived, persist, and often have been revived in communities in which extensive cultural

change has occurred. Tradition-based religious ideologies and ceremonial practices are not separate from Native world views as outlined in the previous sections. As Deloria (1969) makes clear, Native societies are best seen as an undifferentiated whole, which should not be artificially partitioned off into separate spheres. That there are fundamental connections between what we may tend to think of as various spheres or aspects of Native world views or identities is something that reflects Indian meanings.

It should be apparent from the above discussion that Indian members of reserve communities may have very different meanings in the way that they see themselves and their communities, and these views are generally distinct from those held by members of European or western communities. Anthropologists and sociologists often notice connections between spheres of social life which they describe in Native communities. These same connections are not made by Indian community members. As Deloria (1969:264) says, from their perspective or world view, the divisions that allow these connections do not exist.

As an example of religious beliefs and practices that have persisted and remain meaningful on many Indian reserves today, I will point to the Sun Dance, which, like the sharing ideology, is part of an inclusive world view and social identity which has its roots in traditional pre-contact Native societies. As Braroe says, the Sun Dance religion is not divorced from other aspects of Native world view. He discusses it with respect to the ideology of sharing.

> The Sun Dance, too, contains elements of this sharing ideology. It is basically a reciprocal exchange with the spirit world: one gives offerings of cloth, tobacco, and prayers in return for blessings from the spirits. At the end of the ceremony, having fasted and thirsted for a vowed period of up to four days, the participants one by one approach the lodge's center pole, weeping and wailing, and lean forearm and head on it. This symbolizes the dependence of humans on the spirits - a request that they return rain and good fortune in place of the offerings made by the worshippers.
>
> (Braroe 1975:146)

In terms of relationships, then, it is apparent that Native world views incorporate relationships between community members which are in important ways similar to the relationships between people and the spirit world that are portrayed in religious activities and beliefs. In fundamental ways Native religion and religious practice are related to everyday life in Indian communities. Religious practices are part of the patterns of social organization and the ideologies about proper social relationships. It follows that the Sun Dance is deeply involved with Indian identities, in the ways that Indian persons think of themselves as individuals, in their relation to the larger community and its other members, and in the ways that they understand relations of all of these to the spiritual world.

Jorgensen (1972:231-244) describes the Sun Dance religion in these terms as well. Its roots go back to traditional Native societies and lifestyles, he shows that the Sun Dance religion remains relevant in making sense of modern day circumstances and relations with the non-Native society. According to Jorgensen, the relevance of religion or religious practice to modern-day situations is one of the main reasons why

it is still adhered to. The Sun Dance, and other Native spiritual expressions which are still present on reserves today, are helpful in making sense of conflict situations. These religions are able to do so as the spiritual side of the Native world view and the intimate social understandings and relationships of the community. Jorgensen looked at two Native communities which participated in the Sun Dance religion. They were in conflict over what he calls Native collectivity and non-Native influenced capitalistic individualism (1972:235). Conflict involving fundamentally differing values and world views is going on in every Native community in Canada. Jorgensen's ideas about how the Sun Dance religion addresses this common conflict are relevant in understanding its persistence.

> The communitarian ideology of the dance complements the collective Indian ethic. Both preach that Indians must work together in order to achieve. Furthermore, the collective Indian ethic is religiously sanctioned and approved by the entire community when it is preached during the performance of the dance.
>
> (Jorgensen 1972:235)

What Jorgensen calls the collective Indian ethic is very close to what I (and Braroe) have been calling the sharing ideology, and to patterns of social relationships on reserves in general. The Sun Dance religion addresses and, as in the past, institutionalizes this Native ethic or world view. The rituals and beliefs are only different ways of expressing elements of Native identity at the local or community level. However, this kind of understanding of self and community clashes with non-Native ideology which stresses individualism and its associated values. According to

Jorgensen, the Sun Dance religion and ceremony gives a framework for addressing individualism as well, and puts it in a Native context. As is mentioned by the Native authors, Native individuality cannot be simply separated from the setting of intimate social groups within the Native community, or from the community itself. Native individuality has to do with established codes of behaviour and kinship and friendship-based obligations and expectations, and Indian individuality is reinforced by the Sun Dance religion and ceremony.

> The broad individualism that is fostered by the dance, on the other hand, allows a person to achieve religious satisfaction and a feeling of personal success while setting off each participant from the others. Successful dance participation and the acquisition of power also entails a personal code for behavior that each recipient should observe. ... we will learn how the Sun dance participants, especially the dancers, have their personalities transformed through participation in the dance and how they observe their newly acquired responsibilities and obligations outside of the Sun dance context, but within the Indian community.
> (Jorgensen 1972:236)

This research shows how Native individualism as promoted by the Sun Dance is intimately tied to local community codes of behaviour and obligations. The Sun Dance, and other Native religious and ceremonial practices, should be thought of as a religious sphere, and also part of local social organization and as such part of individual and small group community identities. As the Native authors point out, all social organization and world views in Indian communities have a religious element to them. This interpretation makes sense if Native societies are seen as locally based and holistic in nature, as Deloria (1969) claims.

As a Blackfoot elder said, the way in which the Sun Dance ceremony is performed is individually and locally understood. It is not proper for a member of one particular community to try to tell someone else how to run the ceremony.

> Ceremonies too are similar, yet with little differences. I have been to ceremonies, and have been the main person for five Blackfoot sun dances plus numerous other ceremonies, openings of bundles, and other things, but I have no right to tell the Bloods how to do these things, nor the Blackfoot in Brownie [sic], Montana, nor the Crees. One time I experienced during a smoke ceremony on the Blackfoot reserve a while back, with some Bloods participating, a Blood Indian who suddenly started telling us how to do the ceremony. But we ignored him and I continued to do it like I was taught to do it, the whole ceremony.
>
> (Allen Wolf Leg, quoted in Waugh and Prithipaul 1977:13)

The very personal, intimate relations in Indian communities parallel the relationships in the spirit worlds that are known to any Indian society, and it is appropriate for the religion and ceremonial practice should address local issues of identities and relationships (including such things as obligations and responsibilities).

As the Rohners (1970:95-104) describe the potlatch ceremony in a Kwakiutl community, one of the central aspects of the ceremony is the ways that it publicly establishes, reinforces and maintains individual local identities and relationships, through the formal giving of certain items to specific people, in the setting of a large gathering. The potlatch ceremony is obviously not divorced from elements of local identities and social organization, and may be seen as a public investiture of these matters with religious and spiritual significance. Again, indigenous aspects of local Native societies appear to be integrative as the Native authors observe. Some of

these traditionally-based elements of Native society and local community identity have persisted through the period of destructive cultural change, and it should be recognized that there exists a historically relevant local Indian world view on reserve communities. As Cornell (1988:66) points out, in support of Jorgensen's analysis of the Sun Dance, all Native religious movements are fundamentally political. Again, these movements cannot be divorced from issues of local politics and social and political organization. But as Jorgensen and Cornell say, these religions and religious movements, although based in tradition and incorporating indigenous aspects and beliefs, are also addressing specific present day issues and specific local identities and politics.

> These movements sought power via the few cultural resources Indians still controlled: definition, interpretation, belief. What is most significant about them is not their departures from aboriginal roots, but their continuities. They were innovative and conservative at once: invention for the sake of preservation. Against the assault on tribalism, the dismissal of indigenous culture, and the usurpation of Indian freedom, they asserted in their various ways the value and beauty of traditional belief and native forms of cultural practice, the power of the spirit world, the sanctity of land and community, and the essential sovereignty of native peoples.
>
> (Cornell 1988:66)

As Cornell says, politics at the local level, and in the larger political arena involving relations between Natives and the dominant society, are also parts of Native religious movements and beliefs; and are connected to local indigenous belief systems, world view and identities. That these practices and ceremonies continue today is another indication that local identities with backgrounds in indigenous world

views are valid today. Cornell says that these aspects of Native identities and world views are essentially the basis for Native resistance to the larger scale or collective cultural genocide.

> The Sun Dance is an extremely complex ceremony. Most visitors expect from it some form of magical efficacy which may have to do with good health, with economic abundance, with support in hazardous enterprises, with fertility, with harmonious social relations. ...Celebrants are organized in a complex array of cross-cutting social organisations: Horn Society, Women's Society, the keepers of the medicine pipes, the various age societies. As the ceremony is so highly composite, its religious significance is clearly diffuse. It is the great occasion when the Indian collectivity confronts unseen powers.
>
> (Schwimmer 1972:133-134)

The Sun Dance religion is a particular example of local Indian identities, and the role of religious thought in local social organization and individual and community identities. Other Native ceremonies integrate with local social life and identities, and reflect local politics and economics. Together, this holism is part of status Indian identities. For example, even when ceremonies are not directly indigenous in origin or traditional in design, such as a Catholic or Protestant church service, funeral, christening, etc., individuals get a sense of who they are from other community members who attend services with them. Ceremonial events in reserve communities provide a forum for self-definition and understanding one's place in the local community, similar to traditional religious ceremonies. Attending these events in the reserve setting reinforces a sense of local Indian identity, an identity reinforced by society. In fact, because of this continuity of emphasis on local identities, social

spheres are not important or meaningful for members of local Indian communities. This in itself is a locally based Native world view focused on those elements of Native ideologies which have survived cultural changes through continuing relevance to identities, beliefs, definitions and spirituality, as Cornell and the Native authors indicate.

Differences Between Local Indian Identities:

In the above sections, I have made connections between ethnographic materials from different Indian communities. This generalization is justifiable as I have been illustrating some general continuities between present-day Indian communities and historic hunter-gatherer communities. There are many similarities between hunter-gatherer societies in general, which have been noted and discussed by anthropologists. It is to be expected that there are other similarities among Indian communities today. Some of the similarities relate to similar indigenous or traditional ideologies. Some similarities arise because of similarities in the kind of treatment by and characteristics of colonial or non-Native society (as will be outlined in the next chapter). The observation that needs to be made is that the above description of local Indian identities shows that because of the emphasis on local communities and individualism, there are great differences between individual identities and between various Indian communities. For one thing, there are differences in degree of continuities with traditional cultural ideologies and forms of social organization. Traditional Native societies may have been similar in regard to subsistence or

lifestyle, but there were and are innumerable differences between them as local communities. As Lithman (1984) observed, one of the characteristics of Native community organization and politics is its very subtlety; and in a local group where relationships are characterized by intimacy, these subtle intra-community aspects and differences would be more important in terms of personal identities than similar circumstances among communities.

It is essential to recognize that local identities mean local differences; and different identities that are based on local groups, sub-groups and kinship and friendship relations. Similarities between traditional Native communities have always existed. Another kind of similarity has been introduced by colonial relations with non-Native society. These similarities may provide a basis for Native political action on the large nation-wide level, as Native leaders hope. However, there is a difference between large scale political mobilization for specific purposes, and personal identities which reflect how people think of themselves and their world. This personal identity is a local identity involving certain kinds of ongoing relationships and broader (but still locally grounded) ideologies.

> The tremendous importance of our reserves is emphasized here, because it has always been the view of our elders that our reserves are the one place where we can hold to the responsibilities that we have to our Great Spirit.
>
> (Cardinal 1977:222)

These are a few aspects of local Native identities which are related to continuities with traditional or indigenous elements. I have tried to highlight some of the aspects which are emphasized by ethnographers and Native authors which are important to Native identities. Other things, such as indigenous languages that have survived, are also connected to local and regional identities and ideologies. As Chief George Pierre says (1971:27-29), these languages are quite distinct, both from each other as 'language groups' or as dialects within these. It follows that local Native identities may be related to the use of surviving indigenous languages.

> But you shouldn't generalize too much.... Did you know that we have eleven different languages across Canada? And a lot more in the United States. And those eleven languages are split into fifty different dialects. In the United States there are hundreds of different languages and dialects.
>
> (Chief George Pierre 1971:28)

CHAPTER THREE

LOCAL STATUS INDIAN IDENTITIES AND SOME INFLUENCES OF NON-NATIVE SOCIETY

Historical Continuities in Policies, Practices and Relationships:

The first chapter discussed local Indian identities which were related to continuities with traditional Native ideologies. These aspects are an integral part of Native identities today, but they cannot be presented as isolated from effects and influences of the dominant Canadian society. As Cornell says, Natives have had to fight to hold on to their ideology; and this "ideological battlefield" continues today as a central focus for political discussion between Native peoples and the larger society.

> ...Resistance had moved from the political arena - as that is generally understood - to the ideological: long after the warriors had retired from the field, the battle continued on the terrain of ideas, identity, and interpretation. Decades down the road that battle would still be going on, but no longer in isolation from the political arena it had once, perforce, ignored.
>
> (Cornell 1988:67)

It is not possible to describe in detail the historical circumstances of Native/non-Native relations, and effects of these on Native societies and identities. This chapter will focus on this relationship as Native authors such as Harold Cardinal and George Manuel have presented it as particularly important. The important aspects are the nature of the treaties and how reserve communities were formed, the boarding school experience, relations with agents of non-Native institutions, and social and economic conditions on reserves. They have been discussed by Miller (1989) and York (1990). Although cultural and ideological changes had taken place long before the

establishment of the reserves in Canada, the treaties and concentration of Indians on reserves was the beginning of a certain kind of relationship with the institutions of the dominant society. When they were placed on relatively small reserves it was usually the first time that Indians had lived together in such large groups over long periods of time. These permanent settlements were not tied to seasonal resource concentrations. As well, the placing of Natives on these reserves was usually accompanied by the partial or complete destruction of their traditional economic base. This destruction was also part of the Canadian government's strategy based upon their conception of Native peoples, and how to deal with them according to a Euro-Canadian perspective. This breakdown of the Native economy was the case in both the eastern and western regions of Canada. Indian treaties were negotiated during a time of unequal power relations between the Crown and the Indians, and government strategy was hidden from the Native peoples.

> The intention of civil government, now that Indians no longer were militarily useful, was to concentrate Indians in settled areas, or reserves; to subject them to as much proselytization, schooling and instruction in agriculture as 'circumstances' made necessary; and to do these things at least in part with the Indians' own funds. The strategy was based on an assumption that complete assimilation was 'the only possible euthanasia of savage communities'.
>
> (Miller 1989:100)

Indians were considered savages by government agents handling treaty negotiations. It was thought that they had become irrelevant to the Canadian government after they were no longer needed as military allies, a judgement which

was part of the perspective on Indians held by the non-Native society. The desire of non-Natives to obtain mineral or other land-based resources, or for land acquisition for the building of railroads and farms, turned the former Native allies into impediments to non-Native progress, expansion and development. This view of Natives lay beneath the kinds of one-sided negotiations and hidden agendas of the government. It continues today, and Natives, both leaders and individuals, are well aware of it.

> ... Incompetency was a doctrine devised to explain the distinction between people who still held their land free from trust restrictions and those who still held their land in trust. But it soon mushroomed out of proportion. Eventually any decision made by an Indian was casually overlooked because the Indian was, by definition, incompetent.
> (Deloria 1969:31)

The creation of reserve communities, along with the destruction of traditional Native economic bases and the agenda of assimilation of the government, meant that relations between Indians on reserves and non-Native administrators would become paternalistic. Natives were said to be unable to make their own decisions. The non-Native administrators' views have had a long history, one which today affects the ways that Indians think about themselves. Because of this kind of long-term contact with the larger and more powerful non-Native society, it is remarkable that any indigenous aspects remain at all in any Indian community.

Native authors have emphasized the lack of individual or community control over their own lives in reserve communities. It is a particular kind of relationship with the

dominant society, one which is one-sided and has contained a view of Native people as incapable and incompetent. As Cardinal and Deloria say, to some extent this view has been internalized by Native peoples themselves, because local conditions constantly reinforce it.

> Yet submission became merely the first step from freedom to classification as incompetents whose every move had to be approved by government bureaucrats.
>
> (Deloria 1969:31)

> Tell a person long enough and often enough that he is inferior, and likely he will eventually accept the false image you thrust upon him. ... The white man's government has allowed (worse, urged) its representatives to usurp from Indian peoples our right to make our own decisions and our authority to implement the goals we have set for ourselves. ... If you are a treaty Indian, you've never made a move without these guys, these bureaucrats, these civil servants at their desks in their new office tower in Ottawa saying "yes" or "no".
>
> (Cardinal 1969:4-9)

The attitudes expressed above, and the situation of patron-client or wardship relations, have a lot to do with policies of the Canadian government, and it is here that Native leaders are working in the hope of making fundamental changes.

However, at the local level or in the Indian reserve community, these policies found expression in wardship relationships that were imposed on reserve members by missionaries and officials, agents and administrators of various government departments. The reserve situation meant loss of autonomy and lack of ability to control resource allocation and distribution. Things that had been handled directly by Native members of societies came under the control of government agents. This

loss of control, and these relationships with powerful agents of non-Native society, are two of the main themes in books by Canadian and American Native leaders.

Kallen (1982:37-38) says that in Canada, racism has created the paternalistic policies and treatment, which were at their height at the time of reserve formation, and continue in practice today. The paternalism and accompanying view of Natives as incompetent is written right into government policy documents.

> These acts, dating from 1876 to the present, continue in practice, a policy of wardship initiated by the British to protect a supposedly childlike people considered incapable of managing their own affairs. An additional and even more paternalistic tendency toward protecting Indians against themselves is readily discerned in reading these legal documents. (Indian Act - Office Consolidation - 1965).
> (Kallen 1982:37-38)

There are important historical continuities relating to the influence of the dominant society on Native peoples. As the Native authors say, this influence has had and continues to have a great impact on Native identities. The fact that status Indian community members have been isolated from the policy-makers in Ottawa, and have had to deal with the institutions of the larger society mostly in personal relationships between them and very powerful administrators, has meant that Indian identities have remained local in regard to relationships with members of the dominant society. Dealings with Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development officials happen in the local reserve communities. Because of the institutional power of the non-Native agents, their individual personalities could dictate important matters of Indian everyday life. The relations between Indian and Indian agent contribute to the

local identities of Indian peoples who live in a reserve setting.

Denying the Indians the right to make important decisions for themselves has meant that Native identities include a certain amount of bitterness, which is evident in Cardinal's "Unjust Society" (1969). As Cardinal says, racism is at the heart of all the problems facing Native people today (1969:3-5). The relations between Indian reserve members and agents or officials of non-Native institutions (including the provincial and federal government departments), have created an isolation of the reserve community. They have also led to a common misinterpretation of how Natives have been treated as Indian persons, which contributes to a local Indian identity quite distinct from that of the non-Native society.

> One result of such restricted channels of contact and communication is that the "organizational memory" of the Indian society is replete with what are regarded as instances of betrayal and deliberate distortions of understandings contained in the original Treaty between Indians and federal government. In consequence there has developed an extremely strong, though carefully masked, outgroup antipathy directed against all non-Indians and a corresponding in-group solidarity among Indians *vis-a-vis* the non-Indian out-group.
>
> (Zentner 1972:220)

Relationships on Reserves Between Indians and non-Natives:

In reserve communities, Indian individuals often have to deal with outsiders, non-Native people who hold control over the allocation of scarce resources. The dependency situation in which reserve Indians find themselves has to do with their not being allowed to control their own resources. Neither can they control resources which come from the larger society which are managed by their institutional agents.

Status Indian dependence on the larger society is an important issue. It is related in part to the destruction of the traditional economic base. However, in the reserve situation, this dependence takes the form of patron-client relations between individuals; relations which are related to the creation of reserve enclaves. Non-Native individuals hold the power to control resources and the ability to allocate them. Indians often have to behave in ways which they think will help them to get their own small share of the resource. As many historic and modern day ethnographic works show, the non-Native person who is in the role of patron or contact person has the ability to create dependence and manipulate behaviour, and often takes advantage of this ability (Henriksen 1973; Wilson 1921). For the Native, individual relations with outsiders can be demeaning; in fact, the whole situation of dependency is demeaning to the Native peoples involved (Cardinal 1969:16).

> In such isolated northern communities, forces of economic power are not wielded collectively but individually and paternalistically. More to the point, non-ethnic alliances in crisis are not the basis of progress towards community integration or the development of local settlement autonomy. Therefore, greater or more intense contact brings only greater dependence, which means greater dependence on the separate *individuals* of the 'contact person' stratum: policeman, company manager, priest, and agent.
>
> (Fisher 1976:461)

The dependency and relationships referred to by Fisher are typical of the reserve situation, and although things have been changing, these relationships dominate Native - non-Native interaction on reserves. Withholding resources and control of resources largely through the action of a few non-Native agents of the dominant

society comes from government policy and attitudes towards Native peoples. This one-sided interaction often involves Natives having to act a certain way and present themselves in a suitable manner according to the wishes of the "contact person" (as used above by Fisher). This behaviour has become characteristic of Indian life on reserves, and the Indian reserve community is distinguishable from those of other ethnic groups because of it. The kind of interaction demanded by the few people with the power to control resources serves to reinforce and personalize the underlying view which regards Natives as incompetent and incapable of managing their own affairs. Native individuals are aware of this situation, especially since their relations with these 'contact persons' constantly reminds them of their dependent social position. These relationships and ideas over many years have an affect on individual and collective Native identities, one which is different from other ethnic communities. Tanner thinks this is one reason why ethnic theory does not easily apply to Native communities.

> However, Cohen's approach does not consider such matters as the possibility of the state government itself standing above such [class] divisions, adopting a policy of depriving the tribal group of power, and frustrating attempts to make use of ethnic competition. His theory suggests that the use of ethnicity depends solely on competitive strategies in a multi-ethnic environment. It is this assumption that is open to question.
>
> (Tanner 1983:6)

This observation illustrates problems in discussing Indian reserve communities as if they were simply ethnic enclaves. Part of living in a reserve is to be in a position

in which specific dependency relations occur. Dependency is the inability to develop community resources or to develop as a group. Individual patron-client relations with these contact persons causes divisiveness rather than community solidarity. These relations may conflict with the factionalism which divides the small tradition-based Indian community. This situation means that the community as a group cannot summon the resources to enter the arena of what Tanner calls ethnic competition. Because of a policy which encourages individuals to become dependent, and removes the control of resources, competition develops between members of the reserve community for access to scarce resources. This situation prevents the community from being able to compete as a group in the larger socio-economic arena. What these kinds of relationships necessitate, as noted by Fisher (1976) and implied by Tanner (1983), is behaviour by Indian people which is more similar to lower social class behaviour than resembling behaviour of a member of a particular ethnic group. Government policies and administration encourages divisiveness between Indian community members. This situation is noted by Native leaders, and results of this divisiveness can be observed on any reserve community.

> From the Indian person's point of view it would appear that the only way to achieve results with the administration is by means of personal client-patron relationships. ... The imperatives of the 19th century pioneer areas which gave rise to a paternalistic form of Indian administration have disappeared. But the administrative structure, though modified and improved, has remained.
>
> (Dunning 1964:34)

Some Examples of Dependency Relations in Reserve Communities:

Relations between Natives and the people identified as contact persons, who are usually non-Natives in positions of power in the Native community, have been important parts of reserve life ever since the formation of these communities. R. N. Wilson, a former Agent on the Blood reserve in Alberta, wrote a lengthy report in 1921 which described in detail the great power that the Agent could wield on the reserve, and the amazing amount of social, economic and political manipulation that could result from the use of this power. Since the Natives in Western Canada in the early twentieth century were in need of government assistance, and access to these resources for assistance were controlled by the Agent, they could be withheld for any number of reasons. In the case of the Bloods, rations were withheld to force Indians to vote for a land surrender. This surrender was for the benefit of non-Native farmers and businessmen, not the Blood Tribe.

> The ration house maintained on the reserve by the Department for the double purpose of assisting the destitute and providing a medium for the distribution of beef and flour of the self-supporting Indians was, during this period, turned into a vote-getting machine. Aged and infirm Indians who had for years been on the Department's "permanently destitute" list had their rations shut off entirely and were forced to become beggars in order to live, while able bodied Indians prominent among the "land seller" faction were to be seen carrying out of the ration house sacks of beef heavier than they could handle without assistance.
>
> (Wilson 1921:6)

This Agent-controlled government office, which was used to distribute resources produced by the Bloods themselves, also controlled the earnings and

savings of individual Indians. Because of the Department's desire to force Indians to surrender reserve land, people who did not vote the 'right' way were denied access to their own money, and this same money was distributed to other people who had 'earned' it by going along with the Agent's wishes (Wilson 1921:6). The manipulation and coercion of the Blood people by Agent Markle is described in great detail in Wilson's paper. It shows how important was the power that a single individual could have on a reserve. Of course, this power did not originate with the Agent as an individual, but ultimately came from a government policy which had both the assumption that the Native people were incapable of managing their own affairs, and had a hidden agenda of acquiring reserve land from the same Indians. As Wilson points out, the result of this situation was to sharply divide the reserve community, according to which side an individual was on in relation to the Agent. As is obvious, this factionalism was made more socially disruptive because only one group had access to the Agent-controlled resources. Also, the division might have cross-cut traditional local group divisions.

> The immense power of the Government, which on an Indian reservation -- as a reader of the above will have observed -- is so far-reaching and enters into the intimate affairs of everyday Indian life so much that it practically controls the well-being of every inhabitant, was, during this period, exercised by an unusually resourceful official to make miserable the lives of the "Nays" and their families, while the "Yeas" basked comfortably in the sunshine of official favour.
>
> (Wilson 1921:6)

Wilson's paper shows that these relationships were part of the historic relations between the Government of Canada and reserve Indian people, and they had a great effect on social and economic relations and circumstances of the reserve community members. Ethnographic material and the observations of Native leaders in Canada show that these relations continue today in many reserve communities in different ways.

Henriksen's description of the missionary's activities in the small northern community of Davis Inlet (1973:91-113), shows the same social, political and economic manipulation involving his unique position in relation to the access and control of resources and their distribution. In this community the missionary was not interested in land grabbing, but his agenda included controlling social activities such as drinking, gambling and gatherings in the tents of traditional leaders. The missionary had access to resources necessary for successful fishing, such as outboard motors; and would give people access to these if they conformed to his set of moral standards. This conformity often meant going against traditional elements of local social organization and leadership. Henriksen says that because the missionary could keep his access to resources hidden, including access to services of the larger society (like medical care which relied on communication via his radio), he had a social and political position in the Naskapi society analogous to that of a traditional leader. One of the results of this great amount of power which one non-Native person could hold in an Indian community, and the inevitable manipulation that accompanied it, was

a division of the Indian community into two groups, based on who did or did not go along with the missionary's wishes.

Dunning (1959:117) says that in many cases, reserve community members must deal with these representatives of the larger society in order to have even limited access to certain resources. However, these agents and officials may not in fact represent anything except their own personal agendas, and in the larger society they might be marginal people themselves. Native community members must deal with these people on an individual basis, usually in a manner that does not enhance, and may even seriously disrupt the social organization of the community (Dunning 1959, Fisher 1976). These personal one-sided relationships often are important to the community structure and individual identities. These relations with individual agents of institutions of the larger society are very important to understand the historic and present day power relations on reserve communities. They continue to give the Native individuals and communities little control over resources.

> The present high status positions are held by various non-ethnic external representatives of powerful outside organizations. As there is no consensus about the priority or superiority of government, commercial organizations, or church, the various high-status representatives are unhampered by precedent, tradition, or power. Consequently. leadership in these communities is an unresolved power conflict, a continual struggle which is expressed by ad hoc prestige-getting decisions. ... Regardless of the personal qualifications of these high-status role players, or the way in which they carry out their roles, by virtue of their positions in the ethnic community they hold supreme power.
>
> (Dunning 1959:117)

Again, although Dunning was writing in the late 1950s, these same relationships are found today. The one non-Native individual possessing so much power as illustrated by Wilson and Henriksen is less common now, especially on the less remote reserves. However, Indians on almost any reserve must still rely upon powerful non-Native individuals for access to any resources which originate in the larger society. These relationships have many forms and are part of the Native individuals' and community's reliance upon the larger society for many of their resources. As Cardinal (1969) and other Native authors point out, dependency relations with powerful non-Native individuals who are part of larger organizations are an aspect of life on the reserve that Indian people resent and find humiliating.

Since being an Indian and living on a reserve involves these relationships, they also affect the Indian person's ideas about what it means to be Indian in the larger society. These relationships are a part of Indian identities, although they have historical bases in non-Native perceptions and treatment of Indians since contact and the formation of reserves. Even on the reserves in which elements of traditional social organization remain in place and Native people have a say in decision-making, they have to make their decisions with regard to general dependency and control of resources by outsiders. Using these resources means dealing with humiliating and dehumanizing relations with various 'contact persons'.

> The collaborative leadership will soon find that it loses virtually all control over the situation. Social service specialists, economic development specialists, bookkeeping specialists, welfare case worker specialists, and an assortment of other specialists, become regular landmarks in the band office. Not only are their services often of a dubious nature (cf. Lithman 1973, 1983) but their ignorance of reserve community conditions and their insensitivity to the fundamentally different principles of, for example, social organization on the reserve community ... make their presence actually resented. On top of that, by being White men, their presence is a symbol to the Indians of the White men's perception of their inability to manage their own affairs. (Lithman 1984:165)

Because of resentment by Indians who have to put up with interference and manipulation of their affairs, Indian local identities include an awareness of how non-Natives perceive Natives. This perception is usually that Indians are childlike, and unable to manage their own lives and resources. Government policy and beliefs are carried to the local arena through key administrative people who are in positions which control access to outside resources or open access to the outside society. It seems natural that these 'contact people' would be resented by individuals on the reserve, and that they would come to symbolize paternalistic attitudes and perceptions of non-Native Canadians. The policies which are behind these administrative organizations, institutions and processes represented by these contact persons are not of the reserve. The local individual administrators become extremely important to community members, for practical and symbolic reasons. Such relations can be seen as building an 'us-them' feeling in the Indian community. Local Indian identities are affected in negative ways by the one-sided power relations in

interactions with these contact persons. Local Indian individual and community identities are reinforced, since the non-Native presence is so different from the Indian abilities to obtain the resources of the outside society. These contact persons represent something foreign to Indian community members. The inequalities between the Indian persons and contact persons means relations with these people serves to reinforce a local Indian identity which includes at least some degree of rejection of the inability to control their own resources and destinies. As Zentner (1972:220) sees it, Indian reserve communities combine local in-group solidarity and out-group antipathy. The reason for both of these has to do with these relations with contact persons, and policies and attitudes of the dominant society.

Changes in Indian community members' relationships with the larger society have taken place, and these will be discussed later. Administration of reserves has in many cases remained the same; and still means limited direct access to outside institutions and resources, what Zentner calls "restricted channels of contact" (1972:220). The result is that local contact persons are important to Indian individuals and small communities. Even when Natives themselves become contact persons, they must work within the existing administrative structure over which they do not have control. This administrative structure was and continues to be based on the assumption that Native peoples and communities do not have the ability to administer themselves. Frustration with external administration is one of the most important aspect of Natives' desire for change which is expressed by Cardinal (1969, 1977) and Manuel

and Posluns (1974). This is also why sovereignty is so important in the large scale Native political movement. Furthermore, those frustrations contribute to the individuals' local identities.

The boarding school experience will be the next matter to be looked at as an example of a local Native experience in personal relations with members of the dominant society. This experience includes locally-based administrators with an exaggerated amount of power over individuals.

The Boarding School Experiences:

Church-operated residential or boarding schools are another example of how ethnocentric and paternalistic policies can affect individuals and Indian communities. The policies of the churches that ran these schools was similar (Ponting and Gibbons 1980:203-204). However, because the schools were run by individuals who held considerable administrative power, each boarding school should be looked at as somewhat unique; and thus providing different experiences for individual students. Also, the writing of Native individuals who attended these schools show many similarities, but also show how each Indian person, and each Indian community reacted to the schools in their own way. Different things about schools stand out as particularly significant in their minds. In a general sense, then, the school programs were consistent with a broad administrative policy which held that Natives were incapable of handling their own affairs. As Ponting and Gibbons point out, the churches were interested in forcing assimilation and conversion, and they thought

Native cultures were impediments to progress and civilization.

> The role and history of the Christian churches in the colonization of Indians in Canada has been well documented ... and need not be detailed here. Consistent with the prevailing ethnocentric ideology of the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, the churches sought to "civilize" the Natives. This meant converting them to Christianity, wiping out their languages (by force when necessary) and much of their culture, and forcibly instilling in them the fundamentals of Eurocanadian culture. The insensitive and brutally punitive way in which this policy was pursued, particularly in the church-operated mission schools ..., produced a legacy of resentment and bitterness to which the churches seemed oblivious until the 1960's.
> (Ponting and Gibbons 1980:283-284)

The boarding school experiences were an attack on the cultural beliefs, practices and ideologies of very different persons belonging to different kinds of cultural units. This difference meant that these very personal, intimate and locally relevant experiences affected individuals and communities in vastly different ways. As in the previous discussion of contact persons and their unusual amount of undisciplined power over Native individuals, the people who ran the schools and worked in them could also have been marginal people in the dominant society. This possibility meant that, like the other contact persons that Fisher spoke of, their individual personalities could affect how they did their jobs and carried out the broader church objectives. Each individual boarding school was different. These differences may look insignificant, but adding individual personality differences of the school administrators and school staff; personality differences of the individual Indian students and their families; differences in Native cultures, histories and communities;

and differences between the Christian denominations running the schools, these seemingly insignificant aspects add up to highly distinct and local kinds of experiences. Ponting and Gibbons (1980:284-285) show that when changes in church policy began in the 1960s and 70s, these individual church/school views of treatment of Native peoples and cultures were evident among various Christian denominations. The Anglicans took the first steps towards reevaluation, while others followed more slowly. The Catholics were static until the mid 1970s. Churches were different in their positions regarding Native peoples: church policy towards Native peoples was not so uniform as is sometimes thought. This dissimilarity would have had important consequences, especially in combination with the other local differences as noted above.

The churches' involvement in education in the small reserve communities often had divisive effects. For example, different denominations would sometimes compete among themselves for converts and church members in the same community. As one Indian reserve member recalls, this kind of inter-denominational competition created real divisions in the communities, as some people affiliated with one church group, and others with another (Allen Wolf Leg, quoted in Waugh and Prithipaul 1979:16). Also, there were divisions resulting from the clash between Native traditional beliefs and the various denominational ideologies. Some of these divisions directly affected the Native family unit, and were felt strongly at that level. As Allen Wolf Leg remembers, the church played an active role in manipulation of people all of whom

were potential converts to the particular church. The church-run boarding schools played these roles in dividing the communities and families, as they were so heavily involved in the clash between Native tradition and denominational dogma.

> My mother was a Catholic, but after my father came back from the war alive - he was wounded in the Sicily invasion - he vowed to commit himself to the Horn Society. He dedicated himself to this commitment, and as a result my mother was excommunicated . She went to the Protestant Church, and a few years back my father was asked to come to the Roman Catholic Church to preach in Blackfoot. So, you see, times are changing and attitudes are changing. But harsh interpretations were given, harsh judgments all for reason of love, but not respect.
>
> (Allen Wolf Leg, quoted in Waugh and Prithipaul 1979:12)

The church-run boarding schools also had direct effects on Native individuals, families and whole communities. As Manuel recalls (Manuel and Posluns 1974:67), his experience with the harsh punishments in the boarding school meant that when he returned home from the schools, he would no longer respond in the same way to adults. While traditionally the children would help in doing things for adults without being asked or forced, after ten months a year of being made to do things by threats of whippings and beatings by school administrators and teachers, they would not do anything in their own communities since threats and violence were not a part of the adults' relationships to their children. As Manuel describes it, the schools created a generation gap between children and adults in the community. This situation had direct consequences at the family level.

> Our values were as warped and confused as our skills. The priests had taught us to respect them by whipping us until we did what we were told. Now we would not move unless we were threatened with a whip. We came home to relatives who had never struck a child in their lives... Worse than that, they spoke an uncivilized and savage language and were filled with superstitions. After a year spent learning to see and hear only what the priests and brothers wanted you to see and hear, even the people we loved came to look ugly.
>
> (Manuel and Posluns 1974:67)

The boarding school experiences had effects in every local community, and these would change how Native individuals thought about themselves, their families and relatives, and their communities. As Cardinal says (1969:52), the boarding schools and other activities of missionaries introduced two important foreign institutions to Native societies: denominational religion and formal education. As well as the divisive effects mentioned above, being put in boarding schools meant that Native children were removed from the subsistence and social activities of their parents and other adult community members. While the parents in some communities were practising traditional subsistence and domestic activities, their children were not learning and using the same skills along with them. They were removed from Indian social situations, and learning non-Native values and ideologies (Cardinal 1969:53). They were denied growing up in a family and compelled to grow up in a school and its dormitory. The boarding schools and the ideologies they were designed to enforce created deep divisions between children and their parents and communities. These divisions were specific to local schools and communities, and their particular form depended on the school itself, on how it was run, and on the Indian communities that

it was affecting.

As Native authors point out, individual Native societies have always been at different points on a 'scale' of how much they have been affected by contact with non-Native society. For example, in the northern areas, some Native communities are still practising traditional subsistence activities like hunting and fishing, while other Native communities may have lost the resources and skills on which these activities were based. At the time of the boarding schools, Native communities and families were no less different from region to region. The schools themselves were different too.

As Cardinal observes, in general the boarding school experience isolated the child from crucial aspects of their community and cultures, and caused social and cultural effects that are being felt today. The boarding school experience has become a negative symbol for the treatment of Native people by representatives of non-Native institutions and society.

> The residential schools even failed in their first purpose - turning out good little Christians. They alienated the child from his own family; they alienated him from his own way of life without in any way preparing him for a different society; they alienated the child from his own religion and turned his head resolutely against the confusing substitute the missionaries offered. Worst of all, perhaps, the entire misconceived approach, the illogical (to the Indian children) disciplines enforced, the failure to relate the new education in any pragmatic way to their lives turned the child against education, prevented him from seeing or appreciating the benefits of a real education.
>
> (Cardinal 1969:54-55)

Native education conflicts and problems did not end with the dismantling of the church-run boarding schools. Schools run by provincial school boards do not have much success with their Native students, partly because of their detachment from the Native communities. There are still differences between local Indian communities and the larger non-Native society, so that education designed by the province and intended for the non-Native majority often conflicts with values and beliefs of local Indian communities (Salisbury 1986:35). Local Indian communities are frequently unrepresented on the school boards responsible for the delivery of education to Indian communities, and few Natives are employed by the central provincial educational bureaucracy. This situation means that education remains a focus of Native community concern (see Cardinal 1977:56-88).

> In practice regional planning by white officials developed an entire system, utilizing the system of grades, curricula, and recruitment of teachers that was used across Canada in DINA schools. The size of the budget (negotiated, it is true, on the basis of village "needs" that could be quantified) determined the size of the total system expansion each year. Within those limits the particular village needs that were met were those that appeared most urgent. If the expansion was insufficient for all pupils, the individuals concerned had no alternative but to forgo schooling; if the Cree were not happy with the type of schooling provided, their only alternative was the same one of "dropping out".
> (Salisbury 1986:37)

One of the main problems in relating non-Native educational systems to Native students is that these systems are not developed by the local community, but are directed towards achieving provincial or national educational goals, using similarly broad-based standards. The widespread failure of the non-Native controlled

educational system for Natives shows how irrelevant the system is for local concerns of Native communities. Programs that are not built by local communities seem to be destined to fail. Deloria (1969:264) mentioned the holism of local Native societies: Native peoples' education is not a separate sphere; rather, it is another part of the local society and community. If this local community has no say in the development of education, it will not work.

> Education, whether provided by missionaries or government, is never a passive institution. It is an active force reflecting the political and economic realities of the times....
> This dependency became the context in which education developed. In Fort Chipewyan, schooling reflects the context in which it is found, a context of surrendered land administered at a distance by a government other than the one to whom it was surrendered. No more than they are allowed to administer their lifeways of hunting, fishing, and trapping are the Indians and Half-breeds of Fort Chipewyan allowed to guide the education of their children.
> (Fisher 1981:43)

In Indian communities, you cannot separate the individual from the rest of the community; they are intimately connected. By separating the individual children from the community, the boarding schools disrupted the whole society and took control of the childrens' upbringing and socialization out of the hands of the local community and families. In many, if not most Indian communities today, education of the young people is still removed from the local community, and because of this situation social continuity is disrupted and the system is not successful.

> For the middle class urban child the range of role fantasies is almost limitless. In books, on television, in the neighbourhood, he sees many vocational roles played by people who look and talk much like him or his father. But if the child is poor and rural and Indian and perhaps even fatherless, the basis for identification with varied roles shrinks into virtual non-existence. The adult images which educators present to him bear no relation to what he perceives himself to be in the present and they have not the power to sweep him up and elicit from him the hope and the energy required to turn that dream into reality.
> (Waubageshig 1970:55)

Differences Between Communities and Identities:

The previous two chapters have shown how Native identities are locally based; and how members of a Native community think of themselves in terms of well-known individual personalities; relations with immediate and extended families; and events, characteristics and happenings in the local areas. Whether the focus of investigation may be the observable continuities of Native societies with traditional elements, or the effects of contact and relationships with the larger society, in terms of Native identities, these very local ties come to the forefront.

Differences in identities between status Indians in Canada can be seen at many levels. Cardinal (1969:14) speaks of the differences in the ways that Natives think of themselves in terms of belonging to what remain as cultural and linguistic groups, such as the Cree, Blackfoot, Mohawk, Kwakiutl, etc.. He makes it clear that these groups, which each incorporate many individual communities, are another reference point when Natives think about who they are. I have been looking at differences relating to identities at the local level, and pointing out that no common or

homogenous identities exist even among members of the same broad linguistic group. Local Native identities are evident, both in the writing of Native members of these communities, and in the observations of some ethnographers who have worked in these communities.

It is unacceptable to think of all Blackfoot, Cree, or Mohawk people in small local communities as being the same, although there may be similarities in the ways that members of the same broad linguistic or cultural group think about themselves and the experiences that they have undergone. A Blackfoot elder makes this point very clear, when he speaks of the different interpretations of what might seem to an outside observer to be relatively insignificant religious and ceremonial differences. It is easier for outside observers to see the common themes and similarities than the often subtle differences. However, as this elder makes clear, it is these subtle differences that give the local community and society their identities and feeling of being a group, different from every other local group that speaks the same language, lives in the same general region, and has undergone similar changes and experience. The Blackfoot groups referred to by this elder lived in similar environments: all were on the western plains region bordering the Rocky Mountains, spoke the same language and all were buffalo hunters. It is obvious that when this elder refers to different localities in the following statement, he is emphasizing the importance to identities of differences in very local environments. Today, these environments relevant to identities most often mean the individual reserve communities.

> We live east of Calgary - this is Blackfoot country. South of us, near Mcleod, are the Piegans - we call them the North Piegan - and those farther south are the Blood Indians; and the South Piegans in Brownie [sic], Montana. These four tribes are the Blackfoot, a part of the Blackfoot nation, the later Blackfoot Confederacy, and all speak Blackfoot. Among the different tribes in Arizona, or among the Coastal Indians or Eastern Indians, you will find the basic religion about the same. The real difference is the locality, the environment. People like Wissler or McClintock wrote about the Blackfoot in Montana, but it is a common mistake to say: "Well, if these are Blackfoot, all Blackfoot are the same." In each locality the original ceremonies and activities are slightly different....
>
> (Blackfoot elder, translated by Allen Wolf Leg, quoted in Waugh and Prithipaul 1977:3-4)

Recent Changes in Indian Communities:

Members of local Indian communities are beginning to take more and more control over the resources to which they have access, and the administration of their own affairs. According to Manuel and Posluns (1974:2-3), this control depends on the particular local group itself. This is an example of their conception of Native communities being on a sort of continuum of being and having been affected by relations with non-Native society. However, it is not some hierarchical 'scale' of change or response to changes that fits what has and is happening in various local Indian communities. Although it is true, for instance, that northern peoples are going through some changes that are in some ways similar to those experienced by the peoples to the south earlier in time, the historical context is quite different, as are the traditional backgrounds of these peoples. Local Native communities, in general, are responding to different relationships and circumstances in regard to members of

the dominant society, although as Manuel and Posluns and many others point out, there are regional similarities, and even some similarities between regions.

As has been pointed out, local characteristics and meanings are central to Native understandings of what it means to be Native, along with an awareness of general similarities that are evident largely because of government and church policies. As Morrison and Wilson (1986:16) observe, and the Blackfoot elder makes clear, there are various ways of grouping Native peoples, but in doing so one must realize very important local differences that have to do with identities.

Culture areas or regional divisions are a conceptual tool used in anthropology to divide Native peoples into groups for the purpose of making ethnological generalizations and comparisons. In doing so, qualifications have to be made.

> Having argued that it is sensible to think of Indians in regional terms, it is necessary to warn against taking the concept of culture area too literally. "Culture area" is only a generalization, an indication of central tendency: each group also possesses unique practices. Arguments about boundaries (are the Micmac really Eastern Woodland or Eastern Subarctic Indians?), are essentially spurious, giving to a line on the map a specificity that is not present in reality.
>
> (Morrison and Wilson 1986:16)

Within what anthropologists call culture areas or regions, there is great diversity and local differences. This reality continues to apply in discussing recent changes and local Indian control over their lives, resources and local communities. Some Native community members are focusing on reducing alcoholism with locally initiated and administered programs. Others are taking control of education of their young people,

or working to get access and control of natural resources (see York 1990 for an overview of different priorities in several Native communities). In each case, there is similarity of purpose in taking local and regional control over things that affect the Native community members' daily lives and futures. However, this similarity of purpose may be the only possible generalization because taking control means different things in different communities, and the ways in which control is gained to the satisfaction of local peoples are vastly different.

As Marule (1984:41-43) makes clear, Native peoples have common concerns that they can work on through organizations; but ultimately it must be these local communities that make the decisions on how to implement changes to suit their specific needs. According to Marule, decision-making by the local community is an essential part of Native tradition and world view. It should not be disregarded by Native leaders involved in large scale organization.

> We must have such a united political body because, if we try to negotiate on the basis of one Indian nation at a time, we are much less likely to succeed than if we do it as a united people. But in all of this we must be careful to honour an important traditional principle - that is, not to dictate to any Indian community how it should deal with its internal affairs. We as Indians hold many interests in common on which we can work together. We must work together on those commonalities but not involve ourselves in trying to force all our people into accepting the same solutions.
>
> (Marule 1984 :42-43)

This comment makes it clear that one does not impose solutions on local communities, which must be the decision-making units. Changes must be in accord

with local situations, needs and desires. The next chapter will deal with politically situational large-scale Native organization - something that does not imply a group identity in any way, yet is sometimes thought of and presented as if it does.

CHAPTER FOUR

LARGE SCALE NATIVE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AND CATEGORIZING NATIVES AS A COLLECTIVITY OR GROUP

A Different Level of Analysis:

Anthropologists and sociologists often discuss Native peoples as a collectivity or nation-wide group, or minority group with certain characteristics, usually in relation to the dominant society (Cornell 1988:107-108; Tanner 1983:31-35; Larsen 1983:37-41; Kallen 1982:169; Price 1979:236). Although all of these authors agree that describing Natives in the collective sense involves making generalizations that "may not apply to all Indians equally" (Tanner 1983:32), they are discussing Natives as a group in the nation-wide sense; and in doing so are at least hinting that there is a collective Native identity at this level. Cornell says this most clearly, although it should be noted that he does say that collective Native identity, as he refers to it, is not the same kind of identity as local or tribal identity, but is closely tied to political organization at the collective level.

> What distinguishes this century and in particular the last few decades from earlier years is not the appearance of a supra-tribal identity, but its rapid diffusion among large numbers of Indians and its attendant politicization: the swift transformation of condition into consciousness, consciousness into constituency. Whereas in previous years supratribal identity had been limited largely to regional tribal alliance or to religious and cultural activity, in the present century Indian identity joined tribal identity as a basis for political action on a large scale.
> (Cornell 1988:107-108)

Tanner also says that Indians, in general "...share a particular common ethnic or other self-ascribed identity" (1983:32). This presentation of Natives as a collectivity or group with a collective identity is largely the product of anthropological and sociological attempts to put a theoretical framework around a very diverse population in order to work with what Marcus calls "macrosocial theory" (1986:168). However, what Marcus (1986:165-168) is talking about in reference to macrosocial theory is the need to contextualize while doing ethnography; to situate the local communities and what goes on there in the context of the larger encompassing society. The ethnographic material used in this paper was selected partly because it tends to do just that; acknowledge that the individual communities studied are affected by the dominant society, and not isolated entities acting on their own. This point is very important especially in studies of Native peoples - macrosocial characteristics and effects can not be ignored. This is Tanner's purpose - he is talking in generalities in order to provide context for ethnographic material from a variety of individual communities found in his book (1983).

Acknowledging macrosocial characteristics, systems and effects on local communities and identities is quite different from turning multiple and locally based ethnic groups into a single collectivity with some singular identity. It must be asked, when do Native peoples as a Nation-wide collectivity constitute a group? I think that if this group is to be given an identity in a singular, collective sense implying some common awareness of self, we may have a case of an anthropologist or sociologist

creating a group and then giving it an identity in order to make the group seem real in terms of how categorized group members feel about the group. This would presumably be done for the purposes of facilitating political analysis at a highly abstract level. Cornell (1988:107-108) connects this level of analysis to identity in the singular. If this kind of identity exists, it is of a quite different kind than the local identities that I have described in the previous chapters. Also, an inclusive Native identity is not the way that Natives see themselves, even in a political sense in which they acknowledge commonalities among different Native communities and peoples and the need to work together to attain common goals.

Looking at Natives as a collectivity or group with a singular identity represents a sociological or anthropological imposition of ideology for the purposes of analysis at a certain level of abstraction. It involves, in Tanner's case, dividing up the Canadian population into two groups, Natives and non-Natives, and looking at each of these in relation to the other. A boundary is drawn between the colonized and the colonizers, and this boundary is given a lot of emphasis. Tanner (1983:31-35) acknowledges that this involves generalizations about Native peoples, but I think that this is an understatement in relation to the very local identities evident among Native peoples, and the importance of very small kin-based groups, local communities and individualism. Native people may see themselves in terms of local identities, which means that they see boundaries between segments of Indian people. This reality has to be ignored when Natives are presented as a collectivity or group with some

collective singular identity. Further, I have been talking about differences between members of reserve communities composed of status Indians. Looking at Natives in the nation-wide sense as a group which supposedly includes all people of aboriginal ancestry recognizes few distinctions between various Native peoples. This is a very refined level of analysis, which is divorced in many ways from local Indian identities that are described by Indians themselves and by ethnographers working in small local communities.

Native people are aware of commonalities and similarities among aboriginal people in general, whether at the national level or even worldwide. Manuel and Poslun's (1974) concept of the Fourth World illustrates this awareness. The colonial experiences, although very different locally, do have much in common. Some of these commonalities relate to perceptions of Natives by non-Natives, and to the nature of the colonial process in general. It could be said that North American colonial governments have treated all Native peoples as if they were alike. This racism of ignoring aboriginal differences is frequently commented on by Native persons. Native peoples from a variety of backgrounds can understand each other in terms of certain common elements and experiences, they can identify with each other on this basis (Marule 1984). This common experience does not mean that they share a common identity or comprise a group based on common elements. There is a difference between identification and identity which may be subtle in this case, but should not be further blurred by social scientists attempting to discuss these constituent groups

at the macrosocial level.

When looking at common elements among aboriginal peoples, even as they are summarized in generalities by social scientists like Tanner and Cornell, it is evident that these similarities may have more to do with the colonial or dominant encompassing society than with Native identities. This observation does not mean that broadly similar colonial and racist experiences have not had similar effects on the ways that Native peoples feel about themselves. However, it does mean that these commonalities related are to be found at a specific level of analysis, and in certain (usually political) circumstances. In other words, these commonalities are specific; and may say more about the treatment of Native peoples than about the individual Native peoples themselves. We could examine, as an example of the above, the general elements of Natives as a collectivity or group presented by Tanner (1983:31-32).

Firstly, Tanner mentions that Natives do not share many of the cultural values of the larger society. This comment implies that Natives have their own cultural values, and is true in the sense that Indian individuals and groups on reserves have a world view that is different than that of the encapsulating society. However, as was stressed and emphasized by ethnographers and Native authors, there are local tribal or community differences in world views and values and ideologies. Even in a single community these differences can be significant, as was shown by the division by the Rohners (1970) of the Kwakiutl community between subsistence/sharing oriented and

materialistic future oriented people and families. Saying that Natives have different values from the rest of Canadian society is therefore meaningful only at a very general, inclusive level, when the boundary or division is clearly intended to be drawn between Natives and non-Natives. The boundary which this generalization implies is only one of many boundaries among and between Native individuals and communities. Natives may think of themselves in general as having different values from non-Natives, but this is not always true in any individual or local community case. Making aboriginal peoples into a group and then assigning them general characteristics is only meaningful at a certain level of academic analysis, which may be quite divorced from Native views of themselves.

Secondly, Tanner observes that Natives in general have a different perception of historic past and future from the rest of Canadian society, a perception of "decline from earlier independence" (1983:31). Again, as has been shown, this perceived decline was due to policies of the national government; but was experienced, interpreted and responded to by the individual at the local community level in very different ways and with differing results. Also, the Native authors portray this decline as due to specific treatment by a colonial administration; it has as much to do with non-Native actions and attitudes than with Native identities and world views. These latter survived in different ways and in spite of this treatment (Cardinal 1977).

The third and fourth points are directly about relationships with the dominant society's government and institutions. Tanner mentions that Natives in general have

a specific relationship to the "central institutions of society" (1983:31-32). The general applicability of this statement has to do with the dominant society and the institutions it has developed to deal with Native peoples. As Tanner says, the wardship relations have been modified, but the administrative structures are still in existence. These colonial relations in the local community were, and are still to some extent, manifested in individualistic relations with certain key institutional and organizational figures who have a great deal of power over Native lives and community affairs. These kinds of relationships, as I have shown above, have contributed to differences between Native communities as well as similarities among them. As Native leaders assert, these kinds of relationships have resulted in divisions between Native communities, not continuities (Cardinal 1977, 1969; Manuel and Posluns 1969). The fourth generalization about Natives as a group as made by Tanner is very similar to the third, and has to do with a relationship that Natives have to the national system of production. In general, Natives are in a dependency position and lack the power to make their own economic decisions. Dependency comes from government policies, which are and have been based on paternalism and do not allow Natives to control their own lives or resources. Again, the generalization applies more to government policies, than it does to Native communities and individuals. There is far more diversity in Native identity than in government policies. This diversity should be reflected now in what social scientists like Tanner say about Natives as a nation-wide group.

Dyck (1985) lists characteristics of Natives in terms of an understanding of the Fourth World concept. However, he makes the observation that these characteristics are more descriptive of a kind of relationship with the dominant society (which has been quite consistent) than they are of Native identities or communities. As well, Dyck points out that government policies towards Natives and implementation of these policies have not been very consistent (1985:238), and this situation offers another area of difference in treatment of Natives in specific circumstances. Native authors say underlying these government policies has been the constant racist treatment of Natives. As Dyck says;

> Together these characteristics suggest that the notion of a "Fourth World" - at least as it may exist within these three countries - might most usefully be envisioned as comprising not so much discreet groups of people or specified aboriginal societies as complex political, economic and ideological relations between modern states and a distinctive category of people.... A second property of these relations is that both in the past and in the present these have hinged largely upon an ideological dimension.
>
> (Dyck 1985:237)

This analysis is based on generalization; and the creation of two categories of people, namely the colonized and the colonizer. As Dyck says, the discussion is mainly about kinds of relations between these categorized peoples; this comment suggests that the discussion is not talking about identities. Social or individual identities are found in the "discreet groups of people or specified aboriginal societies" as Dyck says. Dyck observes that at this level of analysis, distinct local groups are not involved in a direct way. He shows how different the subject matter becomes when

the level of analysis changes.

> What has happened to the Shuswap within my lifetime is a repetition-in-miniature of the last two centuries of North American history. My people, the Shuswap, are a microcosm of the whole Aboriginal World. Only to the extent that for us it has happened in a single lifetime are we more of a microcosm then other Indian Nations. Nor were we the last to be colonized. The Waswanapi (James Bay) Cree have only been seriously threatened within the last two years. The peoples of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon only experienced active colonization beginning with the Second Great European War.
>
> (Manuel, in Manuel and Posluns 1973:2)

Manuel is comparing his own particular society's experiences with the rest of the colonized aboriginal world. However, he is making generalizations about experiences and treatment by the dominant society, not about individual tribal identities. Common experiences at the hands of colonizing powers does not imply a common or shared aboriginal or Native identity at the national level. As Marule (1984) says, Native peoples in general have common experience and similar events which they can use in order to work together for specific purposes. Nowhere do Manuel and Posluns, Cardinal or Deloria say that Native peoples share a common internal identity as a category of people.

There are today many different identities presented by various Native organizations, trying to be heard or trying to achieve certain broad communal objectives. These identities are the result of individuals with different goals and priorities from communities trying to set aside these differences temporarily for political purposes. As Dyck says, this presentation of a common identity, when

successful, is remarkable in light of the very different backgrounds of members of different communities in the same general region.

> To achieve a united representation, the Western Province Indians had to assert, and act in terms of, a provincial Indian identity that transcended the established divisions of both preconquest and postconquest times. The success and survival of the WIA are evidence that difficulties posed by ethnic and linguistic discreetness, highly localized band identities and the geographical separation of band reserves can be resolved for the sake of unity.
> (Dyck 1983:199)

This identity that Dyck refers to is politically contextualized and situational. It is based on working together for a specific purpose. In other words, after the meetings, the individual members of this organization go home to their respective communities. They will not be likely to continue thinking in the organizational terms of a united identity that Dyck suggests. Their homes are in very different communities, with different values, priorities and goals; and these are what create identities that are situationally specific. They are local world views that have to do with particular local relations with specific individuals as well as the larger society. As Cardinal notes (1969:13), the resolution of local differences is a constant hardship in Native political organization. The basic fact is that Indian people do not share a common identity. We have to question the validity of anthropological and sociological analysis when it involves combining distinct local societies into a common category, giving it a common set of characteristics, or identity and in these ways attempting to make an academic categorization into a real existential group.

Anthropology and Abstraction:

I have already pointed to anthropologists' culture areas, and the previous two chapters point out ways in which this kind of categorization subsumes very different kinds of groups and local communities in the same large category. Native people in these culture areas do not think of themselves in these terms. Anthropologists, who need to categorize for comparative or theoretical purposes use these terms. Deloria (1969:264) points out something similar when he observes that categorizing societal processes into spheres like the social, economic and political is a Western way of doing things, and is not the way that Native community members see their activities. According to Deloria, both traditionally and in modern times, Native peoples saw their local groups and societies in holistic terms, as in effect encompassing all the areas or spheres that we as Western scholars divide our society into for purposes of study or explanation.

Identifying Native people as a group, has led to what is called Pan-Indianism - a concept of shared practices between Native societies and commonalities that can be applied to North American Natives collectively. The phenomenon of Pan-Indianism was discussed as early as the 1930s, and received increasing attention during the 1950s-1970s (Vogt 1972 [originally published in 1957]). In an often quoted article, Thomas (who is both Indian and anthropologist) related the Pan-Indian movement to an attempt by the American Natives to consolidate themselves in terms of ethnic identity. He saw it as a movement, a means of creating an integrated American

Indian nationality.

> One can legitimately define Pan-Indianism as the expression of a new identity and the institutions and symbols which are both an expression of that new identity and a fostering of it. It is the attempt to create a new ethnic group, the American Indian; it is also a vital social movement which is forever changing and growing.
> (Thomas 1972:739 [originally published in 1968])

Deloria, probably one of the best known Native authors in America, thinks that this kind of generalization is an anthropological, not a Native construction of reality. Deloria (1969:81-82) thinks that a category that includes all Native peoples does not reflect Indian identities, which remain tribal or local. He believes that putting Natives in a collectivity or group, whether it is called an ethnic group or an identity, is the product of anthropological attempts to put Native peoples into academic theoretical categories. He also thinks that trying to place Native peoples and local identities into large scale theoretical constructions or categories has caused harm to Native people because of how they have to relate to the larger society, which has the constructs or categories in mind when relating to Native people.

> The massive volume of useless knowledge produced by anthropologists attempting to capture real Indians in a network of theories has contributed substantially to the invisibility of Indian people today.... Not even Indians can relate themselves to this type of creature who, to anthropologists, is the "real" Indian.
> (Deloria 1969:81,82)

Part of the problem, according to Deloria, (and what contributes to his obvious hostility toward anthropologists), is the artificial and theoretical lumping together of distinct local Native communities in order to make Natives as a collective group fit

into general theories. He says that in particular situations in which anthropologists have not conducted research, traditional locally-based Native identities remain more intact, since they have not been subjected to assimilation based upon broad categories or theories. As he says, local Native people do not try to define local identities; they are simply assumed to exist.

> Concern among the Apaches is, however, tribal. There is little sense of a "lost identity". Apaches could care less about the anthropological dilemmas that worry other tribes. Instead they continue to work on the massive plans for development which they themselves have created. Tribal identity is assumed, not defined, by the reservation people. Freedom to choose from a variety of paths is characteristic of the Apaches; they don't worry about what type of Indianism is "real". Above all, they cannot be ego-fed by abstract theories and hence unwittingly manipulated.
>
> (Deloria 1969:84)

The collective ethnic identity envisioned by Thomas is connected to the anthropological practice of seeing Natives as a collectivity or group in modern times. Generalizations and categorizations have always been a necessary part of social science, and are part of what makes it a science. However, when such a diverse population as the American or Canadian Native peoples are placed in a single category, there is little one can say about individual or group identity at that level of analysis. Native peoples as a collectivity contain too many local and regional ethnic groups.

When Natives are collectively categorized in group terms, what is being talked about is not their identities or identity, but a certain kind of relations with the

dominant or colonizing society. Thomas (1972:740-741), while envisioning Indians as a collective ethnic group, realized that what he saw was about relationships with the dominant society. Thomas thought of a Pan-Indian movement as arising from a growing awareness of similarities among the Plains Indians in particular, since the historical circumstances of contact and colonization and being placed on reserves had subjected them to similar experiences.

This collective categorization is always placed in a political context. Native peoples as a whole are only a group because of how they have been treated by the dominant society - because of the racist side to relations between Native peoples and the Canadian government, which has categorized Native peoples as one large and disadvantaged or incompetent group or problem to be handled efficiently with singular and forceful policies for all status Indians. Because Native people in Canada have been categorized as a group by the dominant Canadian society, there must have been an effect on Native identities, and a response. Native peoples have had to organize politically and present collective identities, as mentioned by Dyck, not only to work on common concerns and put aside their differences, but also because that is what is expected of them by the larger society. As Marule (1984) points out, they have to organize collectively, because the band or local community cannot force government policy-makers to listen to them. These are some of the reasons that Natives have been categorized collectively, for historically they have always been categorized in this manner by the dominant society which limits the kinds of political

relations that have existed and continue to exist. As Vogt points out, Pan-Indianism is the result of political necessities and the ways that Natives have been treated collectively.

> The significance of this Pan-Indianism in general terms is that it provides a social and cultural framework within which acculturating Indian groups can maintain their sense of identity and integrity as Indians as long as the dominant society assigns them to subordinate status. In the future, it is probable that this Pan-Indianism will develop greater political significance than it has at present...
>
> (Vogt 1972:96 [originally published in 1957])

The concept of Pan-Indianism may have assumed greater political significance, but it is only meaningful in a political context, and remains divorced from identities at the local or band levels. As Little Bear, Boldt and Long point out, Pan-Indianism in the modern sense is a framework for being able to transcend local identities in order to work on common political goals.

> The unifying sense of commonality and community expressed in the pan-Indian movement has its origins in the universal Indian experience of discrimination and of being deprived of treaty and aboriginal rights. This shared experience provides not only a basis for transcending tribal identifications; it also furnishes a viable framework within which leaders from various Indian tribes can formulate mutually acceptable goals.
>
> (Little Bear, Boldt and Long 1984:xviii)

Although they go on to say that Pan-Indianism is not only a reactive movement, since it includes a general Native appreciation for their own positive qualities and values, they say that Natives acting as a group is essentially a reaction to common experiences at the hands of colonial powers. Pan-Indianism in modern times does not

imply a common Native identity or even common group goals. There are many differences in the way that Natives see unification or the reasons behind it. The object of this unification is not to come up with a national Native governing body, but to strengthen local band identities and representation, things which have been undermined by relations with the dominant society (Marule 1984). In general, then, it could be said that the goal of modern Pan-Indianism or Natives working in the political sphere as a group, is to strengthen identities and power bases; and to gain access to outside resources at the local or band level.

> With both the Canadian government and local band councils reluctant to delegate governing powers to pan-Indian organizations and given the uneven distribution of wealth, the cultural diversity, the geographic dispersion, and the legal divisions of Indian constituencies, it is unlikely that pan-Indian government will soon be realized. Although the call for Indian self-government is emerging as a pan-Indian aspiration, when one considers the present level of development of Indian institutional structures, attitudinal support, and legal legitimacy, the aspiration for self-government has its greatest potential for realization at the local band level.
>
> (Little Bear, Boldt and Long 1984:xix)

When talking about Natives as a category, or group of some sort, in terms of Pan-Indianism or ethnicity, we are far from speaking about Native identities. Rather, we are talking about politically contextualized responses to certain relationships with the dominant or colonizing societies. This observation is true whether we are talking about Natives ethnologically in terms of culture areas, or as regional or provincial political organizations, or as a national group or in relation to the concept of the Fourth World as a category of peoples. Cornell (1988) talks about Natives as a

collective group in similar terms, but he calls what is going on at that level "supratribal consciousness". Although he does occasionally talk about this concept in terms of an inclusive identity, he finds that he must qualify this.

> Urban supratribalism has emerged as a political response to particular characteristics of the contemporary Indian situation.
> (Cornell 1988:133)

Although other authors, like Little Bear, Boldt and Long (1984) have made it clear that collective Native awareness is more than a political response, they also support Cornell's observation that it is not the same as local Native band, tribal or community identities. The point here is that when talking about Native peoples, or Natives in the collective sense, it is not accurate to use identity in the singular, for it does not reflect realities of great and very significant local differences, as the first two chapters outlined. This can be demonstrated by looking at differences shown by ethnographic material and individual Native observations, and it can be shown sociologically and anthropologically at the macro-social level as well.

> ...given the expansion of supratribal consciousness in recent years and the apparent lack of any correspondingly large decline in tribal attachments, it seems evident that for most Indians supratribalism represents not a replacement but an enlargement of their identity system.
> (Cornell 1988:144)

Cornell, after alluding to the identity aspects of what he calls supratribalism, acknowledges that it is not about identity, but about political relationships and action.

> The greater part of the supratribal phenomenon is not, at root, either cultural or psychological in nature, but political. It represents not a search for identity, but a search for a basis on which to act together in pursuit of definable political and social ends.
> (Cornell 1988:146)

No matter what level of analysis or theoretical orientation, it is important to make sure that what is being talked about is properly contextualized. In the case of Natives as a group, or collective Native political organization, the context is political. It would be a mistake to assign an identity in the singular sense to Natives at this level. As the body of this thesis shows, Native identities remain as they always were, highly local and related to small group and community organization, values and goals. This observation does not mean that Native identities have not been "enlarged", as Cornell calls it. Many Native people living in relatively isolated communities are aware of larger issues, and similarities in the ways that they and others have been treated by the dominant society. However, this treatment and its common elements has a lot to do with a colonizing society imposing its own categorization of Native peoples upon them collectively, as Native authors point out. If social scientists do not define concepts and levels of analysis clearly, and specify context and distinguish between identities and identification with a common set of circumstances, they may be guilty of the same kinds of overgeneralization that the dominant society has consistently made about Native peoples.

...Because the articles under consideration all deal with "Natives" as a focus, the context for the use of the term must motivate the precise definition of the term. If this specification within a context is not precise, then there are at least two possibilities for misinterpretation: overgeneralization or stereotypic treatment.

(Wall 1985:37)

CONCLUSION

From the ethnographic evidence used in this thesis, along with the ways that Native authors express their ideas about Native identities, it seems proper to use the word in the plural when discussing Native peoples. Native identities have been traditionally and continue to be local, and specific localities and backgrounds are a large part of how members of small reserve communities think about themselves and describe their societies. This fact is related to continuities in locally specific cultural aspects of the local groups; and a 'Native' social organization which continues to emphasize the small social sub-groups, which are based on family, extended family or broader kin relations. This organization is integrated into Native societies and is part of various systems of codes of behaviour and obligations, both of which are well-defined in the intimate social structures of local communities.

As well as local identities being related to continuities with traditional cultural historical patterns, some of the effects of contact, including being placed on reserves, and having to deal with locally powerful representatives of outside institutions and organizations, has contributed further to Indian identities of a local kind. Although continuities with traditions and culturally specific beliefs and practices are very different from continuities in relationships with the non-Native society, both may be seen as contributing to identities that remain local and relevant in that way to members of local communities.

This observation should not be surprising to anthropologists and sociologists who

talk about Native identities, or work in local communities doing studies and ethnographic work. Sociologists are taught early in their careers about the importance of getting a representative sample. They are trying to sample individual perspectives which can differ so much in the same community that failure to contact a wide variety of the society's members can result in a biased sample and a view that does not adequately reflect the community. Anthropologists doing ethnography are similarly warned against putting too much emphasis on any group of individuals or informants, especially when that group may turn out to be somewhat socially marginal and therefore not represent the larger community or society. In both cases, context is emphasized, and researchers are made aware that identities or objective aspects or indicators of identities are highly individual and related to the individual's social location within the small group or society (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:194).

Native authors and members of Native communities make it clear that individual community localities and local social relationships give each reserve community a sense of identity that gives singular importance to the people living there. This importance is of a social and ideological nature, and it means much more than the reserve as a mere piece of real estate set aside for their use.

Anthropologists and sociologists are trained to be well aware of individual and local differences even when these are subtle. Sometimes it is these subtle differences that give the local community its sense of identity. As was mentioned by the elders,

identity occurs in relation to small local differences in the ways that ceremonies are performed. However, social scientists also have the ability to conceptualize and work at different levels of analysis, involving larger categories and generalizations. Seeing all Natives as a group which has certain broad characteristics and a collective identity, it has been suggested, is a result of a certain level of analysis. From the evidence in the body of this thesis, both from Native authors and ethnographic material, it can be said that many Natives do not see themselves as a collectivity with a collective identity or group traits the way that some anthropologists and sociologists do. Therefore, it seems that this abstract level of anthropological and sociological analysis is quite different from Native identity as it has been found to exist in this thesis.

This conclusion has straightforward implications for anthropological study. Firstly, ethnographic work carried out in any individual Native community implies limitations to the ethnographers' ability to generalize from the specific data, especially when such generalizations refer to questions of identity. This observation does not mean that occurrences in these individual communities cannot be related to macrosocial relationships with a larger dominant society. Marcus (1986) suggests that relating micro-ethnographic to the macro-ethnological is becoming a necessity in anthropology. However, Native local communities and identities cannot be transformed into an identity for a larger group for the purposes of macrosocial analysis. Such a larger nation-wide group or category should be divorced from the

subject of identity. When it becomes necessary to talk about Natives in the collective sense, it should be made clear that the collectivity may be more of an anthropological or sociological construct than an Indian reality. Even in Manuel and Poslun's book (1974), in which they discuss similarities between aboriginal and non-Native peoples' relations around the world, there is no description of Natives as a collective group, especially in terms of identities. Manuel and Posluns are careful to present themselves as talking about two categories, not two groups of peoples; and they and other Native authors point out that the reason these categories have become meaningful is because of specific relations between colonizers and colonized peoples. What makes these concepts into categories which are useful in discussion of social relations is that the colonizing societies have treated Native peoples as a category for centuries, as if they were all the same. We can not discuss Natives in that way in the social sciences if we do not want to perpetuate stereotypes and indulge in overgeneralization. Native peoples, in general, are naturally quite sensitive to non-Natives describing them all as the same, in a racist way. As Chief George Pierre says, it is really not an appropriate question to ask "what is an Indian?" because the answers are not part of the way that Natives think about themselves, and the great variety of local differences and identities makes this question unanswerable.

> As a matter of fact, there is no typical Indian, any more than there is a typical European. ... you shouldn't generalize too much.
> (Chief George Pierre 1971:27-28)

What has been said by anthropologists and sociologists about a collective Native group identity is not a level of analysis central to Native peoples themselves. Large scale political organization at the provincial and national levels has the purpose of the strengthening of the local or band level leadership and political structures. This factor has to be taken into account when talking about Native peoples at the high level of generality.

> It seems unlikely that supratribalism can ever be as profoundly powerful a force as the tribe. More completely the product of Indian-White interaction, it lack the essential structures of kinship and belief - blood and the sacred - that give to many Indian tribal identities their resonant durability. In most cases it is a political, as opposed to cultural, identity that is rooted in political circumstance, not in received systems of practice and interpretation. It is a product of the incorporative process; tribalism, fundamentally, is a survivor of it. And while tribalism may be an end in itself, supratribalism is an end in itself only for those who have nothing else. For the rest it is a means toward other ends, toward the survival not of "American Indians", but of Indian nations.
>
> (Cornell 1988:147)

The Possibility of Using Ethnic Theory in Native Studies

As the above shows, there is a tendency to lump together Native peoples for the purposes of anthropological discussion. Usually this discussion has to do with relationships between Native peoples as a category and the dominant society as another category. This sort of discussion has been going on in anthropology and sociology for a long time. As Tanner (1983) has said, people in the social sciences are aware that doing so involves generalizations. However, although the limitations

as well as the poor scientific accuracy involved in this generalization is well known to anthropologists, generalization about Natives has been a part of the discipline since social scientists started to look at Native peoples.

> Certainly these thinkers knew that classifying all descendants of indigenous origin as Indians required a gross generalization. Yet even the most knowledgeable among them, after emphasizing Indian diversity, readily generalized.... even the meticulous Fletcher saw her mission as interpreting "the Indian" to "the white man" while admitting that "it is always a misfortune to speak of them broadly, because Indians are so very diverse".
>
> (Harmon 1990:107)

Canadian and American anthropologists are beginning to take these things into account, and are creating a new approach to the study of Native peoples. The term Indian is becoming regarded as racist, precisely because it does not take into account the diversity and difference this thesis has shown (Nagel 1982:37). Still, for the purposes of academic discussion, Natives are still commonly viewed as a group, since they have experienced similar treatment by the dominant societies. In the following, Jarvenpa (1985) even puts Canadian and American Native peoples together for the purposes of discussing "broadly similar" relations with dominant societies. As has been shown in earlier chapters, Native authors such as Deloria strongly object to such categorization, which is not a part of Native identities.

> While the focus of discussion will be the Indian population of the United States, parallel developments in neighboring Canada cannot be ignored. The U.S. and British Canadian cultures have provided broadly similar environments for Indian people...
>
> (Jarvenpa 1985:29)

The study of Native peoples can possibly be done, taking into account class-related differences and relations with the dominant society, without using such broad generalization, by incorporating some ethnic theory and terminology. The study of groups and their relations to dominant societies is the domain of ethnic studies, and this is the kind of study that is increasingly being applied in Native studies. Although ethnicity is rarely mentioned, the matters being discussed have been a part of ethnic studies for a long time.

> For the past several years, there has been a growing interest in analysis focused through one or another of a bundle of interrelated terms: practice, praxis, action, interaction, activity, experience, performance. A second, and closely related bundle of terms focuses on the doer of all that doing, agent, actor, person, self, individual, subject.
> (Ortner 1984:144)

Also, changes within groups have not been neglected in ethnic studies, and Breton (1984:129-130) provides a comprehensive outline of the different kinds of changes to groups related to the intervention of dominant societies, and different reaction of members of these groups and the groups acting as units responding to dominant societies. The interplay between groups - in this case the interplay between small diverse ethnic groups and the dominant society, has always been a focus of ethnic studies. This interplay is a large part of what makes ethnic groups important as reference groups and distinguishes one group from another and from the larger society, so it has always been important in ethnic studies (see Barth 1969).

As Dyck says (1990:48), anthropologists need to overcome their resistance to the

contributions of other disciplines in Native studies. Interdisciplinary studies will become increasingly important if anthropology wishes to keep up with the great changes occurring in Native communities, especially in their relationships with the dominant society. Another Canadian anthropologist thinks that the need for interdisciplinary teamwork involves the incorporation of contributions of ethnic theory and terminology.

> ... what has been lacking in the literature to this point has been a comparative overview of the implications of Native ethnicity which would serve to draw together some of the main themes or directions in this area of research. Such a task would also be beneficial in serving to isolate some of the more prominent issues and problems for further study.
>
> (Hedican 1991:3)

This thesis will conclude by calling for more research in the area of applied ethnic theory and terminology as applicable in the area of anthropological Native studies, as Hedican advocates. This is an area that is relatively undeveloped, and could have great potential. Hedican (1991:14-15) is aware of concerns like those expressed by Tanner (1983), Fisher (1976) and Kallen (1982) about applying ethnic theory to Native peoples and communities which are denied the opportunity to develop and participate in the larger economic and political arena. However, he thinks that this objection could be overcome since ethnic theory is so concerned with group relations with other groups or dominant societies; and this seems to be the area to which Native studies must be directed in order to record rapid changes in modern times. These changes in kinds of relationships between community members and

communities and the larger society have great implications for Native identities.

The advantage of ethnic theory is that it has been developed precisely to incorporate change and relationships, while acknowledging the relevance of group or community identities. Hedican (1991) and Albers and James (1986) say that the use of ethnic theory may be becoming increasingly appropriate, as the relations between Native communities and the dominant society changes, and Native peoples increasingly assume more control over their own resources. Changes in this direction mean that Native communities may in the future be able to participate in more meaningful ways in the larger society. Therefore, Tanner's objection to ethnic theory would become less and less important. Thoughtful incorporation of ethnic theory, along with multidsciplinary approaches, may allow for a more dynamic rather than static and isolationist view of Native groups or communities.

> What hangs in the balance for the future of Native societies in Canada is the competence of community members to make their own plans and to implement objectives. The development of competence within the Native community is further dependent upon the negotiative skills of their leaders in dealing with members of the larger society. This factor is largely a matter of inter-ethnic communication, or what might be termed the"ethno-politics of community competence". However the concept of 'ethnicity' when applied to Native people is also a matter of some concern especially in the context of long-standing socio-political barriers that curtail the participation of Natives in the larger society. ... In sum, this paper suggests that increasing Native control over their educational, economic and political institutions holds potential for solving problems of cultural dissonance, and for this reason should be made an area for further research in Canadian ethnic studies. Such a reorientation, or 'reclamation' would serve to reduce

areas of conflict between Natives and the larger society. It would also serve to place Native culture in a more positive light, and holds considerable potential for reducing Native identity problems.

(Hedican 1991:15-16)

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